

IRELAND TO-DAY

Volume I

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EDITORIAL

GREATLY daring, we rise from the smouldering ashes to which so many of our predecessors had fallen—so facile the descent and so swift often the transition from creation to cremation. But hope, like labour, conquers all things. Our national and cultural objectives as they unfold will be our vindication and the degree of our fulfilment will be measured by the co-operation and critical help our readers offer us.

●

THE complexity of the modern State renders it so intricate and the arena of current controversy is so vast that we should like to slip into it unobtrusively and not have to win admission by a bald recitation of our creed. We prefer to make ourselves feel at home and interject disjointedly—in a very common manner of discussion—a few random reflections. To a more serious treatment we shall revert later.

●

WE shall have failed utterly if month after month our commentary should be merely the stone that drops into a still pool and sends out its undulations—the surface regaining its placidity, or the stick that stirs up the same waters and muddies them—leaving to time the task of settling the sediment. We condemn apathy and indifferentism which indirectly account for many of our failures. Some nations, of which we are one, have thriven most under a spiritual impulse—others, such as Germany, Italy and Russia under a patriotic or material impulse. What is certain is that no country can elude apathy or decay if neither impulse operates.

●

NOR shall we in ten lines pontificate about the dismemberment of our country. The separation between our Northern and Southern political units—constituting what is known as the problem of partition is exactly sixteen years established. The crux is not so much the inherent differences of our people in the North or the volume or intensity of 'anti-national' opinion, but the fact that the growing generation is brought up under very different conditions, with different tenets and different outlook.

A mentality exists which strives artificially to make a country out of the northern six counties, to bemoan its lack of tradition and to try to set up one. In their misinterpretation of the price and the value of material dependence, they feel that a political separation dictates the abandonment of the legacy of tradition to which they equally are heirs. Their blood and environment cry out against this divorce. Whatever the differences, they are very brothers as to community of feeling if not of interest when compared with those to whom they are politically affiliated. The tomb at Saul belongs to the South and the Book of Kells belongs to the North, but both of us own the lot.

●

IMMOBILISATION is a current word we cannot resist using. Much of the brains and ability of this country was immobilised, except when packed ready for export, through central government from afar. Much also is immobilised in states dependent on a party system of government.

Immobilisation of assets such as productivity is the core of many a theory and counter-theory, whilst *vis-à-vis* is the immobilisation of labour and energy thrown into stark relief by the mountain of work that awaits the doing.

●

ONE of the most commendable features of recent governmental action in the South is the provision in the Budget for the expenditure of no less than two and a-half million pounds on relief work of a non-obelisk type. Planned work yields compound interest—all else is mere tinkering with a very complex organism.

Unless machinery is created to weld into one coherent and carefully planned policy all the diversified activities of its every department, interference by the State in economic matters is fraught with dangers. The co-ordinating plan is absent but the interference confronts us everywhere, inchoate and formless, but definitely interference, flowing through the entire bloodstream of our social life.

●

DECISIONS are made often on ill-considered grounds and their mutual incompatibility or destructibility is a matter for rule of thumb discovery. Decisions are made without conviction in response to clamant party cries, the fear of the ballot-box or to cap the promises of a minatory rival. Education, bilingual

instruction, the subsidy of the drama—State interference. Unemployment benefit with its acceptance of existing wage levels, conditions of employment control with children dispossessing the one-time breadwinner, raising the school age limit—State interference. Decentralisation of industry, tariffs, quotas, bounties—State interference. Currency anchorage to sterling, expatriation of capital, restriction of money with its isolation of fiduciary mechanism from its two dependents—the vast volume of constructive work needed on the one hand and the unemployed energy to execute it on the other—more State interference. The State has its finger in every pie and it will make pie of everything unless its activities are centrally planned and finance made its servant instead of its bloodless and parsimonious master.

●

ANOTHER pleasing feature of the latest Budget is the extension of the Government's policy with regard to increased allowances in respect of children who are still a charge on their parents. In this civilized country where the large family is the rule, many taxpayers of moderate means will benefit to the extent of being relieved of all income tax for the coming year.

It seems a pity that the Minister for Finance continues to ignore that considerable body of the Public who under modern conditions are forced to regard the more costly of their children—to use an unhappy phrase—as disqualified for such reliefs.

Boys and girls of over 16 years of age apprenticed to certain businesses and professions for whom large fees must be found and who are not in receipt of any remuneration during apprenticeship, seem to be pre-eminently a case for such reliefs under any sane system of income tax. As the law stands, however, only students attending a whole-time educational institution participate in these allowances, while those apprentices who, besides attending professional lectures spend part of their time in offices or workshops, are debarred from benefit.

●

THE Census—regrettably now dissociated in point of time, detail and organisation from that of the remaining six counties of Ireland—has passed with all too little notice of its passing. Whatever the Census reveals, it is the duty of the State to redress the balance of our underpopulation which, unhappily, is too often taken for granted. Trade, commerce, communal

happiness, military strength and a host of other factors depend on our increased numbers, which can resume their normal trend if helped by Church and State, which both stand to gain in peace and stability thereby.

●

THE Turf Festival that for the third year running has had the blessing of luxuriously fine weather, is worthy of comment in that apart from the practical value of its displays and competitions, its holding has a high social significance. Colour and spontaneity have been all but stamped out of the country. We would welcome their return in the form of such festivals in every parish of Ireland.

●

AND now let us be understood. The rights of Irish to recognition not only as *a* national, but *the* national, language, are unassailable. Our language has been rigorously suppressed in the past—all but exterminated—and now insufficiently encouraged in the South whilst virtually outlawed in the North, where a Minister of State recently went through the pantomime of alienating a thing not only precious *per se* but intimately of the very core of our nature, our culture, our environment, our ubiquitous and ineluctable background. For such a language, battling for continuity, no extravagant claims can be made in respect of its literature, yet all sentiment or duty apart, a language which has been the admiration of the world's great philologists and scholars—Zimmer, Meyer, Pokorny, Thurneysen—can long withstand ignorant buffets. Only indifference can spell its final defeat.

By what right do we appear virtually in English yet masquerade as IRELAND TO-DAY? To present a mirror-image of Ireland to-day is not our function but that of the daily press. Efforts are being made to restore Irish to a place of honour, and all honour to those undertaking this herculean task. Our mission is our own—'wish-thinking' will not fulfill it and greater than we have served Ireland nobly and farther afield through the tongue imposed upon us.

A FOREIGN COMMENTARY

WITH wild rumours of convents and churches burning in Madrid to celebrate Communist victories, and of church-bells ringing in Rome to celebrate the poison-gas victories of the Italians, it is somewhat difficult to assess accurately the world situation. It is evident, however, that since the recent French elections, the axis of European politics passes once more through France. Only those who took seriously the views of the "French Press," as reported to us by our own purveyors of news, were in any way surprised at the rejection by the French people of all that Laval and Flandin represented. We grow weary of being told that "the French" are anti-sanctionist, that "the French" want to reduce Germany to the rank of a third class power, that "the French" refuse to consider disarmament. Admittedly such opinions *are* held by a section of the French people, but that section has obtained only 237 seats in the new Chamber of 618.

Now it must not be assumed that Blum and his colleagues have any great reason to love Hitler, who has permitted himself to declare publicly that he wants to "save" France from the menace of Socialism and Communism—hardly a very statesmanlike declaration. One can imagine the editorial comment in the *Morning Post* if Stalin were publicly to declare, on the eve of a British election, that he hoped to be able to "save" Britain from the menace of Conservatism and organised Christianity. It is well to remember, however, that all along the French Socialists have fought for those very things which Hitler now demands. Long before Hitler came to power, the occupation of the Ruhr was consistently opposed by them, the real reduction of French armaments has been their aim ever since the war, the revision of the Versailles Treaty has been their constant demand (amid shouts of "traitors!" from the Right), the immense sums spent on the Maginot line were strongly condemned by them, the increase to two years of France's military service was fought at every stage by them, and it is with this "unpatriotic" record that they and their supporters have swept the country with a poll of over seven million votes.

It may be remarked *en passant* that the amenability of Blum's Government may well be found somewhat disconcerting by the Nazi publicity department. It is highly probable that Hitler will be given an early opportunity to demonstrate his sincerity and to receive in return a full recognition of Germany's

undoubted right to be treated as an equal among nations. The prospect of a Franco-German understanding would appear, therefore, to be more likely than for many years past. Yet in a recent Dublin editorial we find the following reference to Blum : " . . . to him, as to every other Frenchman, there is only one enemy—Germany." In 1872 there might have been some truth in this rather provocative statement, but a certain number of years have elapsed since then. The suggestion that Irishmen have only one enemy—England, would be met by the same newspaper with appeals to "live in the present" and to "face facts." It is to be hoped that Irish observers of the Franco-German situation will learn to regard such unfortunate comment as more exasperating than effectively misleading.

The results of the French elections will have repercussions in many parts of the world besides Germany. In England the erstwhile vacillating policy of the French Government can no longer be used as a pretext, whether it be for British rearmament, for the non-application or the removal of sanctions, or for the gradual isolation of Britain from the scheme of collective security. No longer can British statesmen say : "*We* have always been, and still are, willing to make every sacrifice, but Monsieur Laval . . ." The French people have shown what *they* think of Laval and his works, and Blum has already made it clear that he will support Eden at Geneva.

When it is realised first, that the new French Government firmly intends to devote vast sums to public works and to internal readjustments, financial, industrial, and educational, and secondly, that over 45 per cent. of the French Budget is now devoted to wars present, past and future, it will readily be seen that their efforts to obtain a real degree of disarmament will not be half-hearted.

Again, the heavy taxation of the wealthy will necessarily mean that certain French financiers will look hastily around for a safer country to invest in. Italy is in urgent need of capital. Could Mussolini persuade the foreign speculator that the investment was a *safe* one, French capitalists would be among his first supporters. To be so persuaded, however, they would rather first see a removal of all sanctions against Italy. It remains to be seen whether they will be able to effect such a removal in face of the new France. For the nations gathered at Geneva, to declare that successful aggression is equivalent to non-aggression, might seem to the peace-loving not merely somewhat illogical, but also a trifle dangerous.

Then there is the Austrian problem to be considered. It is

high time that the Austrians were asked quite simply whether or not they desire to become a member of a German Commonwealth of Nations. Opposition to a scheme for a genuine plebiscite on this question would probably not now come from France. Of course, the auspices under which the plebiscite would be held would provide grounds for discussion. Hitler is still suspicious of League plebiscites, despite the Saar result.

On the whole, therefore, it may be said that the present European situation contains at least certain possibilities of peace, many of which spring directly from the French elections. It is to be hoped that in the months to come, the new French Government will prove equal to the stupendous task of internal and external reorganisation which lies before it.

OWEN SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON.



A MESSAGE

(Among the many greetings of encouragement and welcome which we have received, the following is reproduced for the universality of its message.—EDITORS).

I AM all Irish in blood, though born and brought up in England, and I am all in favour of Irish independence being not merely asserted but manifested, quietly, skilfully and confidently, to the world. In literature especially Ireland in proportion to her population stands second to none, and I therefore welcome the advent of IRELAND TO-DAY, a review of comprehensive scope in which Irish men and women can trace the newest phases of Irish intellectual and imaginative development.

JOHN BROPHY.

RETROSPECT

To-day when I heard
A curlew cry
By the salt flood,
Pitiful memory
Awoke, and stirred
Along my blood
In reverie.

Like a bird's cry
Above bright sea,
In keen clear air,
Passionate ecstasy
Came once to me :
Sweet and fair
The years should be.

But the wind lifted
A dream as vain
As a bird's cry
At dusk, in pain :
And vapour drifted,
Darkening the sky
With driven rain.

an plibin.

FOUR IRISH MYTHS

THE Myths are as old as men. Men have ever woven stories around their origins, their warfare and wayfaring, the fringe of life, and outer spaces that lie beyond experience and the physical eye. There is this difference between the modern myths and the ancient myths. The old myths enclosed a kernel of truth in a raiment of fancy. The Irish serving maid who told the children stories of leprechauns, banshees and fairies, knew she was telling them fairy tales, but the nineteenth century historian or sociologist told myths and did not know he was telling fables.

The nineteenth century was distinguished for two types of myths—the one beautiful and of abiding value, the myths of fancy, Grimm, Andersen, Carrol, Barrie, Maeterlinck; the others, the myths of science, ugly and of no abiding value, especially the myths of the sociologists—Gobineau, Treitsche, Chamberlain, Lombroso, Bernhardi. And in the same way as one might measure a door, a skull, the density of water, they measured a sonata, a lyric, chivalry, the smile of Gioconda by ruler and test tube. For so they measured that which begot all those things, MAN, the contour of his skull, the angle of his jaw, the haemoglobin of his blood, the basal metabolism and chemical content of the spinal fluid, the *race*—Nordic, Teutonic, Aryan.

We in Ireland were not unbitten by the mania. We discuss here four racial myths—the *Scots-Irish* myth, the *Gaeltacht* myth, the *Anglo-Irish* myth and the *Anglo-Saxon* myth.

I.

The *Scots-Irish* myth relates that a band of heroes from the lowlands of Scotland discovered a new island in the Atlantic Ocean in the seventeenth century. They landed there as the conquistadores landed in the New World; as Captain Cook and his merry men landed in Australia, and conferred on the

aborigines the immense blessings of lowland Scots culture. The New Men put a palisade around the northern portion of the island, and did all in their power to civilise the natives. But these natives though they were lesser breeds outside the Law would not be civilised. They still persisted in calling themselves Irish, and would not call Britain their mother country, nor would they even name their own language a foreign tongue.

It really was impossible to know what to do with these perverse aboriginals in Northern Ireland. All the other colonising adventures of the Mother Country had ended in the greatest success. The aborigines and natives had everywhere been civilised into paradise—in Canada, in North America, in Australia, or had been reduced to a pariah condition. Here of all lands in this benighted island alone, the natives thought themselves as good as their betters, and indeed they even claimed that Ireland and the Irish should absorb the colonists, not the colonists absorb Ireland and the Irish.

Religion had nothing whatever to do with these contests of the Natives and the New Men. It was all a question of the calipers and race. The native Irish were mikrocephalic and the Scots-Irish were megacephalic. The native Irish had blue eyes and black hair; and the Scots-Irish had brown eyes and red hair. The angle of the mandible in the native Irish was 90.679 degrees, and in the Scots-Irish 90.976. There was also some slight but unrecorded difference in the adrenal cortex, and the fifth lobe of the liver.

II.

The *Anglo-Irish* philosophy differed from the Scots Irish because English culture was so much greater than lowland Scots culture. The Anglo-Irish had the breadth that the broad scholarship, the immense tradition of a thousand years of English culture bestowed. In truth, the Anglo-Irish philosophy did not differ over much from the Irish. Each

in varying ways had a sense of the unity and continuity of European culture from its great sources in the eastern Mediterranean. Each had a sense of the unity of Ireland, if not of Irish life. Each had a hierarchic and aristocratic conception of society, aristocratic in its true sense—a reverence for age and tradition, old wine, old music, old pictures and old books. But in the case of the Irish so perverted has been their history that these things were felt rather as an emotion than expressed in symbols and living memorials.

In the South the Irish and the Anglo-Irish at varying periods had near come together ; there were peregrinations over the political frontiers. There was the ferment of the mind, the glow and splinters from the fire of life—parliamentarians, revolutionaries, oratory, social visionaries, music, poetry, drama, the cry and surge of the crowd, the roll of the tumbril and the hangman's bolt. Up in the north, one lump of dough that lay for three hundred years as an indigestible bolus in the entrails of this country, an inert mass which in all that time—save for one brief period in the eighteenth century—never made any contribution to our political problems ; whose only posture was the intransigent and negative one that never, under any condition, would they enter the Irish nation.

In this Ireland which has arisen from the dead, any one with a sense of political realism or historical vision may judge whether that Scots-Irish political theory will survive. Against the infrangible will of this indomitable Irish people, such a political philosophy has as much chance of ultimate survival as a curragh seized by a blizzard of the Atlantic Ocean and lashed against the cliffs of Moher.

The Anglo-Irish myth relates that Irish life, Irish society, was a seething mass of struggling semi-sentient protoplasm, without direction or purpose, until it was stung to life by an Elizabethan planter, a Cromwellian trooper or a Williamite cornet. Activated by these elements there arose in this country a new culture in the eighteenth century. This culture developed

in the nineteenth century, and in the twentieth Ireland severed from the parent bough is inevitably doomed to drop into that pool of barbarism from which it was rescued in the seventeenth.

Now the Irishman did not interpret his history in this way. He did not think that Ireland's story began with an Elizabethan or a Williamite or a Cromwellian settlement. Nor did Irish society, Irish life and Irish history begin with a buccaneering foray of Norman barons in the twelfth, nor of Vikings in the eighth century. The Irishman believed that Irish life and Irish society was one with Ireland, one with the loam, the valleys and streams; that everything which came into the land should sink into the soil, and drenched by the same dews, fed by the same winds, with Irish men and women, flowers and leaves, find reincarnation and a new birth in a new and better Ireland.

This was no extraordinary interpretation of society nor of history. It was the interpretation of society which every people of any distinction or any antiquity has ever held—from the Egyptian to the Greek. It is the interpretation of society held by daughter colonies which have risen from the seas overnight—Australia and New Zealand.

There was nothing much wrong with Anglo-Irish culture. For their numbers—a few hundred thousand at the time of the dissolution—the Anglo-Irish surely was the most brilliant community in these northern islands. For it was a perfect society and it had a complete philosophy of life—of politics, of economics, of aesthetics, of society, of Irish life, and that which embraced and encompassed all—of Life itself.

Long after English culture had ceased to be English—when it had become neo-English, British, Anglo-Saxon, secular, mechanised, call it what you will—the Anglo-Irish maintained here the pure essence of English culture, tempered, refined and distilled through Irish social and physical environment. And

they maintained that pure essence here because the Irish preserved intact the soil on which a great culture has ever grown or ever will grow—a mystical interpretation of life and its values and easy communion with nature.

There was only one fault. The Anglo-Irish philosophy aborted much more than it produced. Perhaps Trinity College was the most representative memorial of Anglo-Irish culture. Now, Trinity College was a great university. Down almost to our own days it maintained the true idea of a university—a cloistered retreat where theology, philosophy, the classics, jurisprudence, history, politics and the abstract sciences should sit enthroned ; a temple of thought where far from the seething crowd men might meditate. This idea differed from the modern university, where the tender saplings of Parnassus are trampled by a bevy of frowsy girls who ought to be in kindergarten schools, or by a mob of wild-eyed knights of the pestle, who were better pounding pills in guild schools and hospitals outside the sacred precincts. It differed from the Ebenezer Schenectady University of Winsconsin, Pa., or the Samuel Smiles Academical Institute for Self-Help. This Smiles Academy did not teach how to help oneself to the honey of Hymettus that Providence provided bounteous and free for all. Rather did it teach how by *leger-de-main* in a *laissez faire* economy the other fellow's pot of honey might be filched.

The only thing wrong with Trinity College was that it was in Ireland and was not Irish, that on any ten things on which the Irishman had any serious and deep convictions, the orthodox Anglo-Irish philosophy thought the exact reverse ; as for example : the origins of Irish society, Celtic civilisation, the ultimate sanctions for political authority in Ireland, the great religious schism which has rent this country for four hundred years, the plantations, the penal laws, the union, repeal, the tithe war, disestablishment, the land war, Irish aesthetics, home rule, *sinn fein*. And if one can imagine a great French university that was in France, and was not French, a certain

foundation of English society (to which was entrusted by overwhelming power from outside all administrative and executive authority) that was not English; a great Scots University (and that the only Scots University) into which for centuries a Scotsman dare not enter, then one has a perfect representation of Irish life, Irish culture and Irish society as it developed in this country, not for a generation or two or three, but for century and century and century.

The essential fallacy of the Anglo-Irish philosophy was not *racial*; in the sense that there lived in Ireland certain men and women who had mixed Irish and English blood. For thousands of Scotsmen, Englishmen, Frenchmen came to Ireland and were absorbed into Ireland.

Nor was the essential fallacy *political*—that the Anglo-Irish desired the harmonious co-operation of the two countries, Ireland and England. For Ireland from O'Connell to Redmond desired such an end. Certainly the difference that divided Redmond from Carson was not political.

Nor was the essential fallacy *religious*; that is that there were in Ireland men and women who held a protestant allegiance. For Ireland had revered in highest honour men of protestant loyalty who were loyal to Ireland—Tone, Davis, Parnell. Owing to the extraordinary development of Irish history, the religious element was of the essence of the question, but it was not the absolute essence. For a man could be a protestant Irishman just as in England a man could be a catholic Englishman, or in France a huguenot Frenchman.

Nor was the essential fallacy a combination of all three: that there were in Ireland men and women who were (a) of mixed blood (Irish and English); (b) who held that political co-operation with England was desirable, and (c) who were protestant. There was nothing in all these three combined incompatible with good Irish citizenship.

The essential fallacy was that there was in Ireland a communion, cemented together by all these ties, which constituted

themselves a definite society within the corpus of Ireland and of Irishmen, that this society was maintained by England by compulsion, and that the aim of the society over hundreds of years was to win Ireland to its own philosophy of life, not by argument, but by coercion, and that this society and philosophy had no sanctions from the Irish people.

In other words the society existed solely for the purpose of hammering Ireland and the Irish into the Anglo-Irish philosophy, which being interpreted meant English culture, or in its modern development—British or Anglo-Saxon culture. The attempt, looking back over four hundred years, was a complete failure. The Irish culture was hammered out of recognition, dented, gaping, bulging as we see it to-day, and the Anglo-Irish society and theory of life dissolved in a night. After all the hammering of four hundred years there is to-day an Irish interpretation of Irish life, and a Scots-Irish interpretation of Irish life. There is no Anglo-Irish philosophy of Irish life extant.

It was a tragedy for Ireland (and for England, too) that there was not a peaceful concordance between the two societies—the Irish and the Anglo-Irish; so that it were not the life or death of one, but rather a quiet intermission, peaceful sleep and an awakening in a better land. That was not to be. A philosophy of anarchy ended in sabotage and anarchy. And at the last the great culture which bore Molyneux, Grattan, Davis and Parnell is symbolised by a Malay who runs amok, stabs friend and foe alike, a buccaneer who scuttles a ship, waves a cutlass, mutters a curse, and not over solicitous for the safety of passengers or crew, himself sails for safe anchorage to the Isle of Wight.

III.

The *Gaeltacht* myth is the most dangerous of all. For it contains half a truth and it appeals to one of the most dangerous passions—national chauvinism. The *Gaeltacht* myth relates that there once was a great civilisation in this land

distinguished by commerce, crafts, science, the arts, architecture, an uniform, organic and fertile life. Somehow or other—like those phantom cathedrals and cities of the old Celtic legends—all vanished away, and simple peasants of Connemara and fishermen on the western sea-board are the trustees of all that inheritance. If Ireland ever is to come to anything it must abandon Europe, eschew everything foreign to this land, and at the humble hearth of Connemara crofters light the torch which will guide the path to our pristine splendour. That is a myth. It reduces the civilisation of the Celt and Gael to the level of a farmyard patois ; a culture of the cabbage-patch.

The Irishman was great when he turned to Europe. He was great in the early centuries when this country was a last refuge and sanctuary of the classic tradition, and Irishmen were of the very soul of Europe, or of what was to become Europe. The Irishman was nothing when he was turned in upon himself, headed off from the civilisation he had helped to create.

If there were a great indigenous and continuing civilisation here, where is it? Where is the opera, the symphony, the shrine, the ordered life, the pageantry of rural life? If everything which lived in Europe were in an instant of time stilled in death, and there came to the earth a visitant from another planet, he had but to wander through the shrines, the galleries, the temples, the libraries, the villages of that Europe which is coeval with us, to see memorials of a great and continuing civilisation. And were he to come to Ireland he would be seized by a great dilemma—a country that in the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries gave promise of one of the richest of cultures, and then one great decline—a thousand years of terrible night, during which a people, like some strong man stricken with illness, tosses on a fevered couch, and at the last, one rigor that shakes him from head to foot, one last convulsive effort to live or for ever to die, arises ; finds himself speaking in some strange

tongue ; looks out on the old remembered hills, the very names of which echo in forgotten tones the vanished memories of his lost Atlantis.

For a thousand years, there are no great memorials here, and for the best of reasons. During all that time the Irish—their backs to the Atlantic ocean—faced such odds as never in history confronted any other people in any one place. First, two hundred years of the Viking onslaught, and the Vikings came near destroying all western European civilisation—and Ireland more than any country fought the battle of western civilisation.

Scarce had that menace ended when Norman culture, which swept England in a night, contended here with the Irish for two hundred years. It was the Norman bent before the Gael.

Then came the great classic English culture, and to-day modern mechanised life. And between the last two, protestant culture, which struck like a tornado all northern Europe. Protestant culture in its most alluring and virile forms—Anglicanism and Calvinism, and backed by all the strength of an England which had risen to the hegemony of the world.

In marble, bronze, symphony, arch or oil, the Irishman for a thousand years has little. But if man be greater than any of his works, the Irishman has done that which is greater than all these. He has survived.

There is a sense in which the Gaeltacht myth is true. If one says in our western province live the speech, imagery, symbols, metaphors, the idiom, the lore, the moulds in which for two thousand years and more the Irishman cast his thoughts ; that somehow or other that tradition and that speech must be incorporated in our life, or our life and struggle for a thousand years is meaningless—in that sense, the Gaeltacht myth is not a myth.

When we enter the islands of the western Irish coast we feel with Renan, that we are entering a hidden cave of a subterranean world. Here the Irishman can produce

undisputed titles, and trace the pure line of his ancestry back to the very dawn of history. Here is the living flesh and blood of a great civilisation which once spread from Galatia to Donegal. Here are the true heirs and lineal descendants, the living tongue of a people who were great when Rome was an unknown village of Latium, and Athens was but dimly rising from the Attic plain. Those are they who traced by the Rhine and Danube the furrow of the Roman Empire ; first of all men thought of the immortality of the soul ; invented chivalry ; changed the whole course of European imaginative literature in the Middle Ages. And here are the true Irish who sang the sweetest songs ever moulded by the lips of man—who of any one people in any one place made the greatest stand for liberty and freedom. In that sense the Gaeltacht myth is not a myth. It is the naked truth.

IV.

The *Anglo-Saxon* myth is not so much a myth as a menace. These myths are all very well in fairy books ; for you will remember Jack always kills the giant. Little Red Riding Hood gets the better of the big, black wolf, and Cinderella lives happily ever after.

It is quite different when the giant stalks from the story-book and devours Eileen, Marianne, George, Fritz and Gretchen. It *is* and *was* the imperishable glory of the Irish that when everybody was praising the giant, saying what lovely eyes he had, what beautiful hands, what noble feet, the Irishman, pommelled and mauled in rags and tatters, faced Moloch and said : “ He has not beautiful eyes, they are bulging, gaping and distorted. He has splayed feet and shovel hands. He is an ogre and a monster, and I’ll have none of him.”

To-day it does not require much courage to say there is something wrong with “ civilisation ” ; the wind is to the north-east. There is a smell of smouldering beams and smoking rafters. On Diamond Jubilee day at a banquet in the Fire

Brigade Station it required some courage for a lackey to thrust his head through a window and shout to an amazed multitude : " The house is on fire ! " That is what the Irishman did.

But what is the Anglo-Saxon myth? The Anglo-Saxon myth relates that once upon a time fifteen hundred years ago two enterprising bagmen—the forefathers of how many enterprising bagmen !—were wandering by a Pomeranian marsh or Swedish swamp. They lighted on a secret fount of philosophy science and arts, clapped their hands, chuckled with joy and cried : " It's a cinch ! " Straightaway they stored some of the precious waters in casks, formed themselves into a limited liability company, and floated over to England as Hengist and Horsa, Ltd.

Arrived in England they analysed the waters ; turned their backs for ever on Europe and the warm South. And for eleven hundred years they delved and delved in the hope of finding a like fount. And for eleven hundred years English culture—the culture of Westminster, York and Canterbury, of Oxford and Cambridge, of the bowmen and yeomen, the generous inns and spacious village life, of Falstaff and Hal, and Langland and Chaucer, Shakespeare and Marlow, Eton, Winchester and Harrow, was nurtured by these strong waters in the cellars of Hengist and Horsa, Ltd.

After all that delving they struck a " well of English pure and undefiled," which trickled into a stream, and in the nineteenth century swelled into a torrent that has overflown the earth. In North America these waters falling on virgin soil, uncontaminated by the dross and corruption of Europe, bore (as was natural) their most bounteous harvest. It was the full fruition and consummation of all the labours of Hengist and Horsa—neo-English, Anglo-Saxon civilisation. It was the end. The civilisation of the ants. One hundred million ants in the same felt hat and ready-made suit treading the path to the subway. One hundred million ants looking at the same picture ; the sweeties of Hollywood—so much more noble than the

madonnas of Sienna. One hundred million looking at the same play—and what a play—the drama of the saps and yahs. One hundred million listening to the same tune, the folk songs of the metal spheres, ten thousand melodies hammered out of the rhythm of a postman's knock. Music that is slaughtered, gutted, pickled, brined, and packed in discs, with as much of the intimate savour of string quartet or a glee as Chicago or Pittsburg has of Florence or Vienna. Thousands of multiple shops and millions of salesmen, a frozen smile on their lips, less lifelike than the dummies in the window, stretching forth a packet of tinned food in a mechanical hand and saying "Good dah." Millions of peasants rooted from the soil, herded into foul, rickety, rat-infested warrens, the hatches battened down, and society maintained under the dictatorship of the gendarmerie. It is the end. Farewell Athens and farewell Rome. Farewell Byzantium. Farewell Persia. Farewell Chartres, Seville, Chivalry, Tristan and Isolde. Farewell Oxford and farewell Vienna. The age of calculators, bagmen and sophists has arrived. Passage ! Gangway for the saps and guys.

Battered, bruised—a bleeding, shapeless pulp—yet withal pregnant with celestial fire and the spirit of human dignity and liberty, give us our own culture and our own life, and let it develop its own way rather than this desiccated civilisation of the ants, this dry and withered womb incapable of bearing noble or generous fruit.

JAMES DEVANE.

THE ECONOMIC FUNCTION OF NATIONALISM

WHEN I was a boy I detested national sentiment and used in places where young men talk to defend the thesis that "patriotism is a vice." If forty years of mingled English and Irish experience have not wholly resolved my complex, I see now that patriotism differs in no essential way from other compelling human emotions. Curiosity, ambition, desire, *toute la lyre enfin* may be, and too often are, carried to vicious extremes: we are not, therefore, to condemn their practice. Even their grosser manifestation must be indulged in some degree lest worse things happen. It is better—a great deal better—to marry than to burn.

It is too commonly assumed that patriotic considerations cross and run counter to those which are economic: nationalist and cosmopolitan are apt to agree here—the former maintaining that separation justifies its cost, the latter that it squanders the wealth of the world. This view seems to me to be mistaken. I should maintain that in a broad sense of the term economic the whole importance of nationalism is economic, and that however narrowly we define economics nationalism continues to be an essential instrument for the attaining of economic ends.

A case for nationalism may be founded either on a doctrine of divine dispensation, or upon a doctrine of natural right. It will still be pertinent, however, to ask in any concrete instance, *what* God intended or *to what* Nature tended: how, in short, the fact of independence subserves the intention or tendency. Any answer to such question must purport to show that it promotes whatever may lie behind the making of man, and this reduces the matter to terms of economy in the broader sense of the term. Following this clue, let us ask whether from the standpoint of world waste avoidance, a *prima facie* case can be made for independent nationalities.

Superficially it might seem that the fundamental economies of government must extend with the area of control, and that the tendency of nationalism to multiply areas is therefore wasteful. In fact, there is no *a priori* reason to anticipate increase of efficiency from increase of area, as the following consideration will show. Whatever the ability of a directing individual, it is limited by the bounds to his knowledge of the needs and potentialities of those whom he directs. So soon as his area transcends his knowledge there is loss of efficiency, a loss which may be plausibly conceived as increasing in proportion to some power of the radial extension. The wastes of over-centralised government are twofold: first, objective waste through clumsy working of the actual mechanism; second, subjective waste of those faculties for good government which are denied an outlet.

The second of these has been insufficiently appreciated alike by specialists and in popular tradition. Historians find little evidence of it in the records which they examine. A centralised government will usually ignore it, whilst insurrectionary leaders will be preoccupied with the objective waste of what seems to them ill-government. They will hardly be conscious of, and certainly will not dwell upon, the wastage of their own ability. Still less will the rank and file in an insurrectionary movement realise that what at bottom raises up leaders for them is energy seeking its outlet. It is pleasanter to believe either that God has raised up a hero for you, or that you are specially beloved by a demi-god, than to face the cold truth that what happens so excitingly *had* to happen—given the circumstances of the case and the leader's character. If all national heroes had the insight and honesty of Luther, bluntly proclaiming: '*ich kannn nicht anders*,' how far less romantic they would be!

This tendency of all parties to overlook the existence and importance of what I have called the subjective waste has serious consequences. It leads inevitably to the maddening and never-ending discussion between those who assert that a

community *ought* to be content because it is well governed from a distance, and those who assert that bad government with independence is preferable to good government without it. It is, moreover, not unpalatable to suppose that this subjective waste is the more fundamental of the two: that the essential waste of slavery, for instance, is *not* the objective lowering of the slave's standard of life, but so much denial of the exercise of conation as degrades the quality of his life and would, if carried to logical limits, bring life, properly regarded, to an end.

What has been indicated seems to hold commodiously the phenomena most generally associated with national independence whose presence or absence found a *prima facie* case for grant or denial thereof. Differences of language, religion, colour, culture and tradition obviously increase the difficulty which all governments must find in bringing knowledge, sympathy and understanding to their work. In so far the probability of objective waste is increased but still more strongly do such differences portend an increase of subjective waste. In government from a centre delegation of power is the fundamental problem: individuals must be chosen in some way to act as instruments and advisers of policy. The difficulty of this problem is obviously increased by every failure in homogeneity. In a differentiated area or sphere the government evidently must choose either those who understand the sphere of control and are for that very reason likely to misunderstand and be unintelligible to itself or vice versa. The first alternative may reduce subjective waste in so far as the selected instruments possess the energy which would otherwise have run to waste; but the problem is not completely soluble in this way. Misunderstanding must necessarily cause part of the energy to work with friction or to corrode. Such compromises are, moreover, fertile of inefficiency—of objective waste. But their main evil lies deeper. In selecting local instruments an alien government tends to omit, wholly or in part, those able individuals who would be likely to be most powerful under

independence and who have, therefore, most interest in establishing independence: it will enlist preferably the talents of minority, conceivably even of anti-national, factions in the community, intensifying, thereby, dislocation in the area, and increasing the difficulty of its own task of responsible government. Briefly this is the nemesis of our old friend 'divide et impera': *The difficulty of government increases more than in proportion to any weakening of opposition which may be achieved.* The alternative situation, where the chosen instruments are homogeneous with the selecting government, is no easier. Here all potential energy of the governed must find its issue either in non-political fields or in obstruction and insurrection. The central government is served by men who though intelligible to itself are estranged from the governed *corpus*. One further horror remains—exhaustion in the supply of ability to govern at the centre by drafts successively dispatched to the periphery.

It is time to pass to our second proposition, that even on a close definition of economy, nationalism is essential to its attainment. How does the matter stand when we define economics as 'the science of wealth,' meaning by wealth such goods and services as are normally bought in units at specific prices? As regards wealth, in this sense, it is widely felt, and has in the main been taught by economists that national divisions are, from the point of view of the human race as a whole, an unmitigated obstacle to economy. To many it seems an obvious truism that an united states of Europe which abolished tariffs and other restrictions of economic intercourse would be *collectively* a wealthier Europe; or, again, that even though Ireland may gain economically by protection, the *collective* wealth of the archipelago would be greater if we were absorbed with Great Britain. Before criticising this standpoint let me make two initial concessions to it, or rather attempt to bring out two important distinctions. In insisting that nationalism has *an* economic function, it is not implied that *all* its economic consequences are beneficial; rather the thesis that it has a

function suggests that in so far as this function may be misconceived, national policies will often entail wasteful errors alike of intention and of machinery. Secondly, let us remind ourselves of the ambiguity which attaches to the term economic as often as the *period of time* during which a given course is said to be wasteful or the reverse has not been indicated. Since nationalism is essentially a long-period phenomenon it is inopportune to criticise its workings from the point of view of to-day or to-morrow.

If, with these preliminaries, we proceed to ask how Europe would be affected by economic unification, a complex problem presents itself. Evidently its present state comprises many features which for the time being reduce output and which the suggested change would sweep away. This increment of wealth, however, would issue mainly from increased concentration of each industry in the areas which are now best situated for exploiting economies of larger output. We should see growth of manufacturing industries in the areas where they are already strong at the expense of scattered and technically less efficient units: there would be increased exchange between such areas and areas predominantly rural: the displacement of manufactures in the latter *might* lead there to increase of agricultural output, but would not necessarily do so since the displaced workers might more probably emigrate to regions of intensive manufacture, or might leave Europe—*confer* the case of Ireland 1850–1900. The greater concentration of manufactures would strongly assist combination, and this added strength might improve Europe's power to meet competition elsewhere: so there might come increased exchange of European manufactures for the products of other continents, and a weakened position for European agriculture. Meanwhile trade, transport and finance would be modified in harmony with these changes with a strong tendency towards larger units, more centralised and concentrated control. All this might or might not imply more wealth per head in Europe during the generation in which the change occurred.

And now would arise difficulties and perplexities closely analogous to those which were surveyed in our earlier argument. The areas which monopolised manufacturing would exploit their advantage. The cost of standardised, mass-produced, articles would fall everywhere relatively to the cost of individualised products. Great part of this economy would be wasted in competitive advertising: that Americanisation of Europe, which is already sufficiently alarming, would run rapidly its appointed course: and that *causa causans* of Europe's intellectual and aesthetic eminence, local differentiation, would be, *pro tanto*, weakened. There would be, however, another more dangerous feature: namely, the following.

We have seen that European unification would cause each industry to gravitate to those areas which, at the moment, offered the best condition for its growth. If, now, it were true that 'best now' implied 'best always' and the contrary also held, the case for unification would indeed be strong. But, in fact, neither this nor anything like it is even approximately true. Some of the differentials which determine the economies of an area are, no doubt, constant, so far as human volition goes. We cannot alter the distribution of minerals, or make important changes in climate and relief. Yet if we cannot adapt these factors to our needs, we both can and do adapt in enormous degree our needs to them and alter by invention the means which we employ to make them serve our needs. The like holds of that other class of factors, social and cultural qualities, which seem to lie partly within and partly outside of human control: for here, too, when we have reached the limits of our power to modify need and capacity, the gulf which remains may still be bridged by invention.

We may define invention as increase in the number of optional ways of attaining given ends. It follows, immediately, that its progress tends broadly to reduce the differential advantages which certain areas offer as compared with others. The more known ways of doing a thing there are, the less is it likely that

it will anywhere be impossible to do it. It is clearly important, therefore, that all areas should be 'equitably' treated in the inventive ability which is applied to their respective potentialities. Each region should be treated on the basis of its apparent prospects, but the determination of its apparent prospects should be reached without *a priori* bias. How may such unbiassed appreciation be obtained? It is impossible to obtain indifferent judges, since every man thinks first and most of what is, comparatively speaking, near to his hand. Expertism may reduce this difficulty, but cannot wholly remove it.

There lies here a danger in the modern tendency to concentration of industrial control, and the analogy to the political problem is even closer than might at first be thought. The cost in time and effort of intercourse at a distance implies that the government of a vast and centralised industry can never know much of the relations between or the industrial capacities of its employees. These difficulties are accentuated by local aggregation, more particularly by separation between town and country. Finally (and more particularly in the case of Europe) we might expect that economic unification would imply waste of capacity in an appalling scale through the persistence of existing differences of language and culture. Would great organisations with headquarters in Berlin, for instance, give equal chances of advancement to Poles or Czechs, as compared with Germans? We might find within ten years in every corner of Europe just such complaints of inadequate attention at the centre to regional capacity as darkened the temper of Ireland in the nineteenth century.

Nationalism, then, is essential in the economic sphere to mitigate those wastes of creative ability and regional potentialities which large-scale organisation portend: and the longer the run of time which we envisage, the more important must its service in this strictly economic sense appear to be. Like all the intuitive instruments which human evolution has fashioned it is a double-edged tool. These intuitions, just because they

are (as we say) 'natural,' work like nature with prodigal waste. Who shall recite the full story of the horrors past and present incidental to the desires for food and drink, for sex and family, for service and power? Of all the wickedness done and doing in the names of religion, art, morality, patriotism? As we turn in imagination the reeking pages that tell what man is and was, we may well wonder at his capacity to put these things behind him and face each day with a new hope. It is something to discern that the ideals which have so often illuded him are *not* at bottom merely illusions, but that, if we probe carefully, we find each of them rendering some account which our reason may approve.

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This paper was written without special thought of any country. The editors have suggested that it should end with some reference to 'Ireland to-day.' Its central thesis, that the main evil of foreign control is waste or corrosion of energy, leads up to the idea that where a nation which has been threatened with absorption by another is in process of detaching itself, there may well be an interval during which complete and immediate detachment would imply more waste and corrosion than an arrangement which 'patriots' may condemn as a disgraceful compromise. In the Free State, a compromise (be it disgraceful or not !) is in actual being. Ability and energy which could never have run happily in English or even British Imperial harness are finding more and more their purely national outlets. There may still be some (*vide* the recent deeds of violence in the south) whose energy is corroding, but their numbers are not large. Meanwhile, others whose family tradition or natural bent cannot easily and swiftly be weaned from a British career have still sufficient opportunity. Of Northern Ireland we cannot speak so favourably. Here the continuance of political integration (even in a modified and partial form) with England implies that a percentage of native ability and energy express

themselves in gnarled and twisted growths with wastage of valuable material. The fact that there has been no solid progress of industry in the North during the past twenty-five years has a number of causes; but each party finds little difficulty in proving to its own satisfaction that the policy of its opponents is mainly responsible therefor. Meanwhile, to many outside observers it is suggestive of a stalemate position in which neither can either accept or make itself acceptable to the other, with the result that confidence weakens and vital interests decay. In the opinion of the present writer any such conclusion is unduly pessimistic. Despite its obvious difficulties, Northern Ireland has made great strides since it accepted qualified self-government fifteen years ago. In particular, Belfast has shown in the day of its adversity a power of civic progress which puts to shame the brave days of forty years ago when 'any fool could make money.' Nor do its achievements stand alone. Everywhere in the midst of groaning and despondency things are being done, and sooner or later the six counties, waking up to a proper pride in this performance, will find themselves as united in sentiment as it is wholesome for any community to be.

HUGH MEREDITH.

GOOD-BYE TO THE GLENS

Shure, I've watched the swallows gather
When the leaves began tae fall,
As I've tramped it thro' Glenarriff,
All m'lonc, at set o' sun;
And it's vexed I've been tae see that soon
Nae flow'rs wud bloom at all,
An' that all the birds wud lave us
Wi' their singin' jist half-done.

I hae watched the swallows gather
In the wanin' amber light,
As I stood an' breathed the fragrance
O' the fresh, rain-moistened loam,
An' hae thought nae music sweeter
Than I've heerd on them still nights
When I listened tae a turf-filled cairt
Go creakin', joltin', home.

I hae watched the swallows gather
Knownin' well they cudnae stay,
But it's lone they'll lave the Nine Glens
Flyin' sou'ards, ivery one;
But what matthers it at all? Shure,
I, too, soon will be away
Where my dreams went, wi' the swallows,
Doon the pathway o' the sun.

PADRAIC GREGORY.

THE GREATER IRELAND

To build up a young state is no doubt the first task for Irishmen, and politicians may be almost as important as we think. But there are potencies that depend for their exercise on the will and the imagination of quite a different type of citizen. One of these possibilities, as I see it, is the knitting of Irish-Americans to Ireland. In Irish-America there is a huge reservoir of spiritual resource to which the routine politicians are blind. To waste it is to lose the Irish-Americans, and by losing them to deplete them. We in Ireland, on the other hand, in spite of the divergence of our ways, need nothing so much as a fuller association with the greater Ireland that is in America. But to win it we must plan for it. We must think and we must act. It can offset the helpless tendency of our people to gravitate toward England, both by positive emigration, and by that emigration of the mind which is so intelligible.

The nature of this Greater Ireland that exists in the United States is not so obvious as it seems. Only when it is understood, both in quantity and in quality, can the possibilities of real interchange be studied.

The known number of immigrants is certainly impressive. Within the span of any long life more Irish have crossed the sea to the United States than now inhabit the thirty-two counties. That is a monstrous exodus. Suppose that forty million French men and women had, in the lifetime of an existing member of the Academy, passed from their home and established themselves in another land. A transplantation like this staggers the mind. It is similar to one of those "migrations" at the dawn of our era, the dumb movement of great masses of a population, in obedience to some obscure social or economic law.

Obviously unless such immigrants know their history well, and organize their memory, and hold their connection with the mother country, they tend to melt into the new land they have invaded.

Had the Irish left a self-governed land, they would of course have gone as colonists rather than as emigrants. The English, for example, are not properly an emigrating people. They have taken England with them to Australia and New Zealand, Canada and South Africa, even to the Fiji Islands and Kenya. The institution of the "mother country" is real, though the Canadian may talk of "home" with a perfect Yankee twang. One great colony, now the United States, did break away, but even the United States has kept England in its system.

It is clear that the Irish did not go out as colonists. They took Ireland with them only as a memory, not as an institution and while there may be anywhere from fifteen to twenty million Americans whose grandparents were Irish born, the memory of their mother country has already begun to fade. The bond has softened to a thread of sentiment. The reasons for this are apparent, once one examines the Irish in America as they really are.

They went to America with two powerful ties binding them to Ireland, outside the family tie. One was political and the other religious. But the cultural tie was weak. Poverty and conquest had enfeebled culture, even folk culture. Hence the immigrant was pronounced by Irish only on the family, the nationalist, and the Catholic side.

Until there was some constitutional settlement at home, it was certain there would be no forgetfulness. Everyone who knows the loyal and romantic Irish psyche knows that. But the settlement, still provisional and inadequate to many minds, has been crucial in the history of the Irish-American, in my opinion. The relation between the exile and the home country entered on a new phase when the Treaty was signed, particularly because the fresh immigrants who could stir up the exile were reduced by "quota."

In the old days, when New York politics called for a parade on St. Patrick's Day, the Irish could be rallied by tens of thousands, and even at the present time the traffic in Irish

loyalty is by no means an extinct industry. The Irish-American vote exists, and the vote will go on existing even when there is no political binder in the form of an exile's programme for Ireland. But for the Irish-American, as for the great American public itself, the Treaty undoubtedly took the steam out of the controversy with England. On the death of King George V., for example, a Congressman of Irish stock at Washington made a hot traditional speech of the kind that would have gone big in 1921. But the sorrows of Ireland, intensely important in American politics fifteen years before, did no more than excite a yawn or a little amiable derision on this occasion. The American public had, in 1920, given it dead against the Black and Tans, and this had been of vital importance to the Irish. The Irish cause, from the 1916 executions to the Treaty, was not only a winning cause in America, but *it was largely won in America and by the Irish-Americans*. Had the United States not existed, had England not feared the attitude of the United States on the Irish question—so irresistible on democratic grounds—the Treaty could never have been won from England. America brought home to Lloyd George the importance of Ireland. The flying columns were, of course, the first fact in the fight; but the newspaper columns made the flying columns effective. The fight in Ireland resounded in America. Its resonance deafened Downing Street at the moment the Allies wanted soft music. And to de Valera, as to Parnell before him, Irish-America was so indispensable that he left Ireland to court it.

To-day the Congressman at Washington who makes his hot Irish speech may stir his people, the people in his district, but he does not stir the ordinary Americans, and consequently Whitehall is not worried.

America has not adopted the English view of Ireland for all time. An Irish Republic could, of course, become a living American issue if America required to make an issue with England, and so long as six counties are cut off by an imperial

power the Irish can always create an issue, but the grievance is not sharp enough to be irresistible and unless Tory England take the tone which originally cost it the American colonies it is unlikely that its Irish policy can again excite America. Certainly a prejudice against England can be found in America, altogether apart from Ireland. The least flattering version of English imperial policy is relished all over America by popular audiences, and the aristocratic lecturers who come from England to patronize their American audiences leave seething resentment behind them. The Irish, in the throes of a new conflict, could enlist this strong prejudice, but they do not now possess the leverage they once possessed in American politics. Ireland is not now an issue in the American mind. Ireland has fallen out of current news in America, especially the news furnished from London and through English channels. (Since Ireland is a sore spot, and the Irish settlement a painful episode, it is no wonder that Ireland is no longer Made in England news).

If the political tie has come to be relaxed in this way, the religious remains, and you may say that so long as the Irish-Americans are Catholic they will remain Irish. I do not hold that this is indisputable. The tendency is not altogether for the Irish to group with other Irish as Catholic. It is for the Irish, because Catholic to group with the Poles, because Catholic, and with the Italians, because Catholic, and with the Slovaks, because Catholic. What one finds in Catholic Universities and Catholic circles generally, is this tendency of the immigrants to blend on religious and not on national lines.

It is quite true that in Tammany the Irish have grouped with the Jews as well as the Italians, but in Tammany the Irish were consolidated on national lines very early. Elsewhere one is struck by the strength of the other link. There is a college football team, for example, known as the "Irish." Perhaps twenty per cent. of the names are Irish, no more. That twenty per cent. is melted into an ex-European conglomerate of great diversity, and as the Poles and the Italians and the

Slovaks and the other Catholics move up in the economic scale they will more and more intermarry with the Irish on the same economic level. That will thicken their Catholicism, but it will thin the association with the mother country. It is already happening, especially with the wealthiest Irish Catholics, and the process is likely to accelerate.

In the case of a distinguished nature like that of Eamonn de Valera, of course, the blend of Spanish and Irish has not impaired an intense Irish nationalism. He is one of the Irish-Americans who, though cast into the melting pot, was early sent back to Ireland. But I could name dozens of half-Irish who became detached from Ireland, by reason of their adherence to the non-Irish strain in the family. When these alienated half-Irish marry again into the non-Irish world, the Irishness is thinned to transparency. I myself have a Jewish-Irish niece, and four American-Irish nephews. Their Ireland is already the shadow of a shadow. Even with a Catholic niece or nephew the chances of a mixed marriage are considerable, and then the Irish element is washed into the melange.

With the church as a preservative of the Irish as Catholics there is unquestionably a delay in their diffusion. But does the preservative do more than mummify? When one looks at French Canada, one sees that the colony has not stayed in touch with France, however Catholic, it has remained. It is eighteenth century Catholic France in an ice house. The same arrested culture is to be noted among Irish immigrants.

I have met Irishmen in America so mummified that they seemed to me almost pre-historic. There are Irishmen driving taxi-cabs in New York who ought to be in the National Museum, like bog butter. How they do it, how they manage to feel and think and act and look like stub-ends of an extinct era is a social mystery. They drive their cabs as if they were ploughing stony soil, with grinding and a ferocious clatter and a monstrous zeal. Their very faces are lined and hardened into archaic masks. They slap and bang through the traffic with a stone-age

ruthlessness. It is an experience to ride with them, and as their names and photographs are displayed in front of the passenger their origin is no speculation. In immigrants like these there has been no new rooting, simply a persistence in folk-ways that a stubborn will has glazed over, at immense expense of spirit. Among the unemployed are knobs and mounds of such discarded Irishmen. They could not adapt themselves, and once they leave the cluster around the historic Church their fate too often is to go to the bottom.

But these troglodytes are only a proportion. Most of the Irish have adapted themselves eagerly, as the United States Senate now shows (which is said to be about 10 per cent. Catholic Irish in origin). Reflective Americans increasingly acknowledge that the Irish are a highly important element in the American psyche. Those born of native Irish parents since 1880, let us say, have reared American families of a social status superior to that of their immigrant grandparents. From these families come the lawyers and journalists and actors, the priests and business men and public officials, whose achievements are proof against the old anti-Catholic Know-Nothing and A. P. A. opposition, not to speak of the Ku Klux Klan.

But if religion gives new associates to the Irish, and politics no longer takes its main impulse from Ireland, what remains to knit these fifteen or twenty million people with their mother country? What machinery exists, beyond the machinery of the County Associations and the tourist traffic, to weave the old and the new countries together?

There is no machinery. The new Ireland that is being moulded at home by the stock from which these millions sprang has devised no method of sharing its achievement with the exiles. Moreover these exiles have systematized their thought and their emotion about Ireland on the basis of old, unhappy, far-off things. The constellation of their thought and emotion no longer applies; and the new Ireland does not convey itself.

Even when the new Ireland sends the Abbey Theatre to express itself, or when the old Ireland returns home for a trip, there is a lack of intimacy that can only be called tragic.

One great reason for this cultural disparity is the contrast between machine America and pre-machine Ireland. The "returned American" sees Ireland through the glasses of Chicago or Fall River or Butte, Montana—and Ireland smiles at him, and scorns him, as a "Yank." Very few imaginations are flexible enough to bend from one nationalism to another; the Irish imagination least of all. For all that Irish-America has done for the mother country, there can be no possible doubt that this mother country has the common, thick-skinned *British* prejudice against America, and has never shown the least imaginative gratitude toward, or appreciation of, or response to the romantic and loyal Irish immigrant.

When one thinks of the millions in money that have been poured back to Ireland, one would suppose that the mother country could not be kept from inventing ways to celebrate the relationship with Irish-America, to show hospitality and fraternity. Hospitality and fraternity! It is, we must say, often shown in private, but never has a young state been less resourceful in the polite arts than Ireland, less gracious in its soul. It is not a question of spending money on banquets and balls, though they are universal patterns, but of establishing ways of friendship and releasing the goodwill that goes down to the roots of these exiled millions. That goodwill is being wasted by the Irish, where a similar goodwill has been used by the English to cement a commonwealth of nations.

Ah, but can the Irish organize anything? Of course they can. If half the brains that have gone into the Hospital Sweepstakes had been inspired by a notion of cultural depth, the whole future of Ireland would be different. The Sweepstakes draw millions into Ireland, and the Irish everywhere have co-operated, but a lighthouse can mislead the birds as well as lead the ships, and the bird-snarer is not the right kind of

lighthouse builder. The real relation between Ireland and Irish-America must be on another plane.

Cecil Rhodes showed what could be done by a single patriotic Englishman who had opened his imagination to England from the distance of South Africa. With less political taint a foundation such as the American-Scandinavian has demonstrated how a relationship can be developed. The Irish in Ireland have completely failed to carry over their achievement to their American brothers, and have failed to arouse Irish-American excitement about the past from which this present has evolved. It is Harvard University which carries out the excavations that reveal the Irish past. No Irish-American has conceived it. Nor has he thought of opening the door to American universities for brilliant Irishmen. It is Harkness, Rockefeller, Carnegie, to whom the bright Irish look for scholarships. The Macs and the O's have not had a creative spark among them.

Yet unless the Irish in America are to be as cut off from the mother country as the French in Canada, there must be guidance in the cultural field. It is not the Irish government or the American that can give such guidance. One of the most amazing things about modern thought is the super-importance given to the State, and by consequence to the politician. It is true that in the wrong hands the State is destructive of freedom and growth, down to the crops in the plains and the children on the hearth. The State in the right hands can favour life quite as much as its evil counterpart can wreck it. But what is the State when you analyse it? It is not really based on the politician or the bureaucrat. It is not a smooth concrete surface on which smooth concrete policies are founded. It is a mechanism by which policies are rolled to their ends along roads firmed by consent, and that consent can exist independent of the State in regions where the State is powerless. Could the State have created the Oxford Dictionary? When Dr. Trench called on the Philological Society in 1859 to collect materials, and

the Society enlisted 76 volunteers, a consent was obtained out of which grew the work, until it became thirty-five times larger than at first contemplated, with twenty times the number of "readers." The State does facilitate consent; it cannot monopolise it, even if it is ready to kill and to tax to the limit.

It is not a one-sided relationship that is desirable. The Irish-Americans can be more complete as cultural beings if they relate themselves to cultural Ireland. That is what the Anglo-Saxon Americans have always understood for themselves, and it is what the sensitive Irish could perhaps reveal to those who belong to their stock and share their origins.

A nation has something paradoxical about it. It is, first of all, man's way of grouping himself with other men to survive—and that is no easy or trivial matter in an insane world. But, as time goes on, this way of grouping develops a character of its own, becomes an experiment in human quality, and the experiment can become so elated and so passionate, especially in times of trial and under threat of extinction, that the individual surrenders himself in order to have the group continue. The group becomes an entity, a mystic entity. It enchants him, and elaborates him. He wants to spend himself for it, and its quality soars into poetry for him. He is, in fact, ready to die for it, and to murder for it. He becomes a spy for it, and a conspirator. A gleam comes into his eye, so that he looks half like a sneak thief and half like an El Greco saint. The sins committed in the name of love are nothing to the sins that have dyed bright colours into national flags, in the name of freedom and honour. Politicians who are called hypocrites are often merely patriots—that is, unselfish devotees of an egoism, casuists in the service of a whole people of whom they detest 45 per cent. Thus no plausible ethics has been worked out for national survival, in which brute instinct underlies the pursuit of a dream.

But the dream, as James Truslow Adams has analysed in "The Epic of America," can be something in the very essence

of a people, whether the State forwards it for not. Ireland has dreamed such a dream. By the creation of a State it is now possibly nearer its achievement. But its Civil War, following the Treaty, shattered the vision for many exiled Irish, and now there is less real reciprocation between the mother country and the Irish-Americans than ever before. The dream has faded for those very people who most needed to possess themselves in terms of their deep-rooted past.

That past is common property between Ireland and Irish-America. But as it merges into the present, as it takes new shape, becomes newly inflected, what do the Irish in America know of it, and what do the Irish at home know of their brothers abroad? The ignorance is as deep as the ocean itself. There has been a grotesque failure to relate the exile to the mother country. And Ireland, cut off from Europe, and turned in upon itself, shows many signs of apathy and isolation.

FRANCIS HACKETT.

THE GAELIC TRADITION IN LITERATURE

The Irish Government recently published a tiny book which attracted little or no attention at the time. It is a collection of verse—I shall not call it poetry—by the Bardic School of Muskerry. What, the reader may ask, is a bardic school? It was a fairly common feature of Irish life a hundred and fifty years ago, and may become so again if the educational policy of the Government succeeds. It is a club, society—call it what you will—of poets who meet to read their verses to one another and occasionally stage a poetic debate upon some subject of general interest. Following are poems by a teacher, a tailor, a professor and several respectable farmers. In impeccable versification the teacher orders a suit, addressing the tailor as ‘poetic, well-mannered, educated tailor,’ and the tailor replies in similar terms. The president of the immortals addresses the proprietress of the local hotel in words like these—my translation is fairly close :

Here's to your health, O Kate McSweeney,
Long shall the bardic board remember
The liberal flow of the circling measure
You gave to song without thought of payment.

There is a poem on the local hall which informs us on the unimpeachable authority of the parish clerk that never since the pure and ancient stock of Niall ceased to hold their feasts at Tara has anything been seen to equal it. The bards are also deeply concerned about certain thorny spiritual problems, for instance, the scandalous attire of women with their short skirts, flesh-coloured stockings, bobbed hair and low necks. Naturally, they all fulminate alike against enemies of the Irish language. One expresses the wish to give them a drubbing with black-thorns until as he says himself, blood flows in torrents down the hills and fills every hollow place in the land. Another is more concerned with cultural issues and endeavours to raise

the dispute to higher levels by pointing out that it would be quite easy 'to make smithereens of and smash the repute of coarse English in Ireland the noble and bright.'

Now, though this may all seem perfectly harmless, a childish form of amusement, I should wish my readers to note the characteristic procedure: the florid address of teacher to tailor, the fantastic praise of the village hall, the concern for the suitable attire of women, the assault and battery of black-thorns (in the day of Colts and Thompson guns), the scorn and hatred of English speech. For this, I submit, is the Gaelic (I might even go farther and say the Celtic) tradition; a little exaggerated, made a little more ridiculous by the fact that its enemies are no longer Dane, or Norman knight, or Cromwellian adventurer, but the knights of the twentieth century, the commercial traveller, the cinema man, the bus-driver. But it is the same tradition, that was already old when the first Roman raised a spear in Gaul, though perhaps some of these verse-makers have never heard of Gaul, and Rome is but a place they make pilgrimages to.

2.

To trace their genealogy, one would have to show how they derive from the Munster schools of poetry of the eighteenth century and how the teacher's poem to the tailor on ordering a suit of clothes is child of O'Sullivan's poem to the smith, Fitzgerald:

Make me a spade-handle straight as the mast of a ship,
Seumas, you clever man, witty and bountiful
Sprung, through the Geraldine lords, from the king of Greece,
Then fix me the treadle and send me home my tool.

One would have to show how these derive from the bardic schools proper, which were really schools for the study rather than the practice of poetry and reserved for the well-to-do children of bardic families; and these in turn—not, mark you, from the monastic schools—but from the world of pre-history

and Pagan tradition. But it will be sufficient if for the moment we lump them all together under the familiar but inaccurate name of bards, and ask ourselves what, in their heyday, the bards were.

O'Donovan, the eminent Celtic scholar, replied for us in a phrase which has satisfied subsequent critics and has never, so far as I am aware, been challenged. The bards, he said, were 'the journalists of their day.' Never were there better journalists than the Elizabethans, and this is the description given by an Elizabethan journalist of these 'journalists of their day.'

"The third sort is called the Aesdan, which is to say in English the bards or the rhyming septs, and these people be very hurtful to the commonweal for they chiefly maintain the rebels, and further they do cause them that would be true to be rebellious thieves, extortioners, murderers, raveners, yea, and worse if it were possible. Their first practice is if they see any young man descended of the septs of the O's or Mac's, and have half a dozen about him, then they will make him a rhyme wherein they will commend his father and his ancestors, and in the end they will compare him to Hannibal or Scipio or Hercules or some other famous person, wherewithal the poor fool runs mad and thinks indeed 'tis so . . . The Rackry is he that shall utter the rhyme, and the rhymer himself sits by with the captain very proudly. He brings with him also his harper who plays all the while that the rackry sings the rhyme. Also he hath his bard which is a kind of foolish fellow, who also must have a horse given him; the harper must have a new saffron shirt and a mantel and a hackney, and the rackry must have twenty or thirty kine, and the rhymer himself horse and harness, with a nag to ride on, a silver goblet, a pair of beads of coral with buttons of silver. . . .'

Now this, it seems to me, is a very odd description of these 'journalists,' but this is not my only purpose in quoting it. It shows, I believe, what good journalism is, because though

the English writer may have been prejudiced (and one historian considers it 'the most complete example of propaganda against the Irish literati') he gives us a number of important and interesting facts. Do the bards give us such facts about the Normans or the English? Do they even give us facts about themselves? Here is a poem edited by Professor Bergin, and interesting in itself as showing the amazing arrogance of the bards (a quality I must return to). A bard has lost his patron because, forsooth, he killed a tax-collector, a mere churl, as he says himself. 'Trifling was our difference with the man; that a churl was abusing me and that I killed the serf—O God, is this a ground for enmity?'

And now, seeking a new patron, he addresses Richard de Burgo and praises his establishment.

'Eye has not seen to our knowledge the side of a house with a larger retinue, a house where white hands were longer, a house where white-soled feet were more slender, a house where clustering locks were more brilliant and where hand-linen was more lustrous, a house where shoulders and bosoms were whiter and where ladies were more red-lipped, where locks were more curving, bright and yellow, and blue eyes shaded by darker lashes, a house wherein were more golden jewels, a house wherein were more serving men, a house wherein were more spencers of noble birth—that has not been built and will not be built.'

I do not suggest, however, that the encomium which is the substance of such verse is merely the journeywork of hacks and parasites. The bards went through a long and arduous discipline, and their compositions were matters of intense pride and labour. What I do suggest, as something so obvious as to be scarcely worth demonstrating, is that it is ritual; the ritual of a primitive society on which Christianity has scarcely impinged: it is part of a gigantic system, of poetry, antiquarianism, genealogy, history, in which the twin gods worshipped are the gods of race and place. Considered as hymns, not, as they are generally considered, as literature, the bardic poems

are quite intelligible ; then the encomia of house, household and magnificence become a spell to avert the evil eye ; the extravagant laudation of the chieftain's person—' O curling locks ! O soft cheek ! O clear eye ! '—is easily explicable by the importance attached in primitive communities to a physical perfection in which the magical power of the king resides.

But what is far more difficult to explain is how such an elaborate form of primitive life came to exist in Ireland as late as the seventeenth century. Now, the Irish had two sorts of learning. One was the new learning which came out of books, latinity to wit ; the other, the old, fossilised pagan learning which was mostly oral and which I look upon as the Old Man of the Sea of Irish literature. There was, of course, a certain give and take between them. As Professor Thurneysen has pointed out, the story-teller who recast a number of the Ulster sagas in the great tale ' Tain Bo Cualgne ' was following a Latin model, and the very beautiful early lyrics were all inspired by Latin literature. But the fact remains that after the Golden Age, after the Latin civilisation that produced the early hymns, the new culture, instead of snaffling all that was good in the old and then destroying it, adopted the fatal principle of live and let live. The economy of nature does not permit of any such generosity. Within a few centuries the old culture had re-established itself and destroyed the new, so that for Europe of the eleventh and twelfth centuries Ireland was pagan country. The cause seems to have resided in the church itself, any intellectual vitality on whose part would have been bound to result in a wide and general conflict of interests. On a small scale, there was such a conflict, one presumes, and at one period it looked as if it would end in the dissolution and banishment of the bards. This took place in the sixth century ; in the thirteenth there seems to have been another slight revolt, but each time the chance was missed ; the enemies of the bards never intellectualised their attitude, they wished to banish the bards without banishing the whole crazy system, and the bardic

order, as impossible, as infallible, and as unenlightened as ever, was in existence a thousand years after the Convention of Drom Ceat, while the simple mind it disciplined and moulded is still to all intents and purposes, the mind of a large part of the population of Ireland.

In Gaelic literature we can see very clearly the way in which this destruction of European culture was brought about. The normal attitude—a good deal less than the correct attitude—towards the old learning is that of the scribe who wrote down the ‘*Tain Bo Cualgne*.’ ‘I, however, who have copied this history, or more truly legend, give no credence to various incidents related in it. For some things herein are the feats of jugglery of demons, sundry other poetic figments, a few are probable, others improbable, and even more invented for the delectation of fools.’

Criticism has treated the monk ungently and with nothing like his own fine sense of values. For he is rather less expressing the normal rather than the correct attitude of a Christian of his day. And because Ireland at an early date rejected this attitude the type of mind that persisted until English began to oust it was that of primitive man faced with a new civilisation he could not comprehend or absorb. I say it became fixed because in Irish literature it is a definite fixation, more marked I should say than any other quality. It is in a poem like the *Old Woman of Beare* written about the ninth century, in which a legendary figure compelled to enter a convent, laments that the good days are gone.

I that had my day with kings,
And drank deep of mead and wine,
Drink whey-water with old hags,
Sitting in their rags, and whine.
That my cups be cups of whey,
That Thy will be done, I pray,
But the prayer, O Living God,
Stirs up madness in my blood.

It is in the Fenian sagas, early and late; all of them are haunted by the *revenant*, Tuan or Caoilte or Oisín—the names

change from age to age, but the figure remains the same—who comes back to an Ireland where everything as a result of Christianity has dwindled, shrunk, grown cheap and ugly and old. Here it is in a noble poem, written over a thousand years after Christianity. Oisín is supposed to be speaking.

Patrick, you chatter too loud
And lift your crozier too high,
Your stick would be kindling soon
If my son, Osgar, were by.

If my son, Osgar, and God
Wrestled it out on the hill,
And I saw Osgar go down
I would say your God fought well.

How could the Lord you praise
Or his mild priests singing a tune
Be better than Fionn the fighter,
Generous, faultless Fionn?

With never a spoken lie
And never a lie in thought,
In truth and the strength of their hands
The Fenian battles were fought.

There never sat priest in church
A tuneful psalm to raise
Better spoken than they,
Marred by a hundred frays.

What you and your monks proclaim,
The law of the King of Grace,
That was the Fenian's law,
His home is their dwelling-place.

If happier house than Heaven
There be, above or below,
'Tis there my master Fionn
And his fighting-men will go.

Ah, priest, if you saw the Fenians
Filling the strand beneath
Or gathered in streamy Naas
You would praise them with every breath.

Patrick, ask of your God
Does He remember their might,

Or has He seen, east or west,
Better men in a fight?
Or known in His own land
Above the stars and the moon
For wisdom, courage or strength
A man that was like to Fionn?

These poems have one thing in common, they are poems of return, ghost poems which declare again and again that there hath passed away a glory from the earth. The poet, sitting with Christian Charity on his knee, tells her what a good time he had with Pagan Cynara, which is all very well for Cynara, but rather tough luck on Christian Charity. And the curious thing is that nobody seems to have realised the importance of it.

Here then, I suggest, is the true picture of the bard, and not only of him, but of the whole system he represented. I once wrote a fantasy called *The Man that Stopped*, and the type of the Irish system had certainly stopped. Sometimes he was pushed, sometimes he was even carried, but, however far you took him, at the end of it he stopped just the same. He stopped anywhere and everywhere, in poetry, law, story-telling, social organisation, theology: one can measure his conception of any of these things by the verses I have quoted which represent the mind of the fifth century carried on into the seventeenth. Transplant him to Louvain, Prague, or Paris, and still he refuses to go on. One cannot explain a single phase of Irish history or Irish literature without reference to this fact. 'The Normans,' we read in the work of one very fine historian, were superior to the Irish in military equipment, in the science of warfare, and in political knowledge and craft. They were especially superior in the art of fortification and their success was largely due to their castle-building.' But I submit that not blunderbus nor bastion could so lay them low but the fact that they were living spiritually in the fifth century. This was the dead hand at work, and we shall see other examples of it.

(To be continued.)

RETROSPECT

PARNELL was dead. Half a nation had bayed him to the grave. The other half had whined meanly for the sins of one who had been their leader, their hero, their demigod, but not of them. A shade with hawk eyes and hawk nose, sneering at democracy above a grave, thanked God for that. The Fenians, ogres armed with dynamite, were a handful of garrulous old men, luxuriating in bitterness. Ireland was a province, contented, growing fat and sleek, respectable and propertied in her middle classes. The world was their oyster. Their sons aspired to the Indian Civil Service, a panel practice in the Black Country, to be enrolled among the soldier priests of Empire and carry its Gospel with equal mind to the Zulu witch doctor and the Brahmin of Benares. They counted Trafalgar and Omdurman, Cawnpore and Waterloo in their tradition. Their daughters, looking in the mirror of a London season, aped its foibles for the band promenade on Kingstown pier.

It was a time of peace and plenty, of certainty and the wisdom of money-getting. The Agrarian war had dragged itself to a whining close, and was thought best forgotten by the growing gentility. The heirs of absentee, buck and squireen would soon be extinct within the body politic. The land laws of successive governments provided legislative cushions to ease their fall. The land of Ireland promised to belong again to the Irish, that is, to that proportion of the inhabitants who, massacred, proscribed, starved, hunted, exiled and supplanted, had refused to suffer extermination. But their present victory was a victory of surrender, of great expectations from the antics of a *deus ex machina* on a stage in London, of patronage courted and wheedled and flattered after long waiting in the draughty lobbies of the great.

In the end the enemies of the people had succumbed to their own inanition and the failure of the aristocratic philosophy.

Their natural and traditional purpose was lost to them. Their only purpose, as a body that had maintained England as their spiritual home, was the extermination of the native population. Baulked of that by the growth of humanism in public opinion, their remnants stood bewildered as to their own function. But for almost a century, since O'Connell's time, the peasant had been looking to London for his deliverance. His leaders, men old in oratory and procrastination, had been followers in the wake of O'Connell, whose ideal was an English speaking province, a society ruled by property and the solider Sunday-school virtues ; every man free to worship God in his own way, provided that God were also the protector of property and its privileges. Away with the barbarian past, with its Irish, its spailpeen spouting disaffection and French Jacobinism in barbaric verse. A people will reap the ideals of its dead heroes and O'Connell, with his heart in Rome and his body in Glasnevin, had achieved his wish, wanting only the paper treaty of Repeal. But the process was fatal to the character of a people. Now the people had their land and their offspring thanked God that they were happy English children. The same selfish, unthinking, jealous and unChristian philosophy of property that had made the landlord the curse of two centuries descended to those of the people who were reinstated in the soil. Only those that owned had rights. Of the labourers and workers let the devil take the hindmost.

One cannot but feel that the tendency of the Church in the Ireland of this period was towards insularity and at a time when the term Ultramontaniam was being bandied about, the very contrary was truer that Ireland with the terrible hiatus in her own tradition was losing also her close contact with the precious heritage of Catholicism, rich in Gregorian and Gothic, rich in a civilization that was its child, mellowed with centuries of scholarship, old and sure. The Church in Ireland, emerging from its back streets, was powerful at that time, but it seemed content with the acknowledgment of that

power, and did not stress, if it concurred, that the spiritual integrity of a people must express itself in the whole sum of their lives ; that private and public and national morality are inseparable in the organic state ; that the growing meanness, toadyism and commercialism were signs weighty with omen, and that all life, not merely the misdeeds of the village scape-grace, is in the province of spiritual leaders.

What of culture ? It was a popular word at the time in a debauched, ladies'-boarding-school meaning. But culture is before the arts as soil is before wheat. It touches all that a people do from the local dance to the building of their houses. It shows through all the things a people make and do for themselves, their farm implements and their furniture, their clothes, their songs, their conversation. In rural Ireland the culture of the people was the product of two centuries of degrading influence. Houses were mean and unadorned. The village street strove after permanence and achieved ugliness. Dancing was not encouraged. Farming, from being as it should be, a self-contained and self-sufficient mode of life, had become a business. The ideal of the more wealthy was to produce enough to enable their families to live as people do in a city. Agriculture, instead of the first, was looked upon as the last and most degrading of occupations.

In the cities, the middle classes, a generation or two removed from destitution and Gaelic, affected a shoddy hand-me-down culture, with antimacassars, bric-a-brac, wax fruit under glass and a piano in the parlour. They had Thomas Moore and Alfred Lord Tennyson, Mrs. Hemans and Mrs. Henry Wood for their recreation. They proclaimed Irish nationality with the green immortal shamrock, a pipe in the gob and a pig on a lead. To the people of England, Ireland must have looked like the servants' quarters seen from upstairs, a quaint microcosm of amusing imitations, queer superstitions and sentimentalities, and a grateful depository for last year's clothing.

What a far cry from revolution ! What a far cry from the agonised joy of :

“FEARR BEIT I MBARRAIB FUARBEANN
 I bFEITEAM SUAINGEARR GRINNHEAR
 AG SEITG TRODA AR FEINN EACTRANN
 ‘SA bFUIL FEARAINN BUR SINNSEAR.”¹

“The thought of revolution was the exclusive possession of a few remnants of the secret societies of a past generation.”² It was there, however, unconscious of itself, but there indubitably, and there a force of health under the leprous surface. Only youth can know shame, can blush and writhe in spirit for the shame of parents, townland, parish, country. The youth of Ireland discovered shame. They cast off the heroes and idols of their fathers. O’Connell was dethroned. Instead the dragons teeth sown by his enemies, Tone and Emmet, Mitchel and Fintan Lalor, bore fruit. Men went back further still, to an Ireland forgotten by O’Connell and a century seeking peace. They went back in the ancient language of a people to the heroes of myth and the heroes of history. The Gaelic League worked to bring back the language of a people as the only sure badge and sign of nationality. Young Ireland, enthusiastic, earnest, naive sometimes, was looking for a soul, laying the foundations of achievement. Anglo-Irish politics was dead, as a force for good or ill, and its philosophy, that we, without moving a finger were the greatest people on earth, died with it. This new movement had pierced the sham of that false pride. We must do, work, fight. We are mean and poverty-stricken in achievement. We must achieve. We must create spiritual riches. We will take no more from England, for that has been our undoing in the past. We will create our own wealth. But so far they were few, spread over many fields. The Literary Renaissance began in poetry, not yet quite escaping the half-light of contemporary decadence,

¹ ANGUS MAC ‘DAIGRE O’DALAIG.

² James Connolly.

and sought to be Irish or Celtic in the pedantic sense of Matthew Arnold's reading of Macpherson and translations from Taliesin. It, too, in W. B. Yeats particularly, was the work of individualism escaping or seeking to escape from the poverty of life around it. It had no feeling for common life, mourned in its ivory towers the passing of a race that knew beauty and realisation and sorrow. It was the dramatic movement that answered the vital need of the moment, the need for criticism, for stripping the self-satisfied of their sentimentalities. They had the creation of a century to end. The people must first realise their shame before they will strive to change or see the need of it. Æ was the prophet of peaceful regeneration. He wanted a literature that would be a religion, would enrich with its own richness, ennoble and sanctify. He wanted a country rich and content, happy and prosperous in its own fields. "The men in any rural district, united together, could make the land they live in as lovely to look upon as the fabled gardens in the Valley of Damascus." But how could the people be persuaded that all was not well with the world they lived in. They had first to be told and made to believe. Would all the preaching or writing in the world rouse sloth and supineness into life and energy?

There was Pearse, schoolmaster, student of Tone and Emmet : there was Connolly, onetime dock labourer, labour leader, student of socialism, looking at Irish history from the lowest rung in the ladder of the classes. It was these men who discovered the touchstone, the driving belt that was to harness the growing energy of mind to the destiny of a people. Honesty was abroad and out of that honesty came the realisation that there must be a spiritual cleavage between England and Ireland before the political union could be repealed or would be worth repealing. So thought Pearse. To Connolly justice for the country was useless without justice for the least of its people. It was dynamic in these men that Ireland must become a nation, not by political treaty or bounty begged of English

politicians, but of her own spiritual strength. They had no argument in words that would prevail against these middle-class world of money and vested interests, against the obtuseness and deafness of imported culture. But they were fighting for Irish integrity in heart and mind and body, realising again with the old poets that Ireland in the grip of England was a woman held in a brothel, wronged and degraded. These men swore to annul not only the conquest, but to repudiate the bargains that a century of surrender had achieved. What argument had they who called on a whole people, a people with a new-rich complacency still upon them, to embrace a tradition of austerity and sacrifice. Their own hearts yearned to cast off comfort and fat certainty. They were not gloomy men, disgruntled intellectuals. When the poets among them sang of their purpose they sang of a rose that their blood was to make red. How could the power of the Castle, or the complacency of Rathmines understand, or heed when they heard: Alas for you that your power is measurable in men and money and guns. For on our side there is neither limit nor measure to the power you let loose when you spill the blood of one man.

They died, those heroic ones, and twenty Easters have flowered and freshened over their graves. They gave a country spirit and courage with the spilling of their blood, turned water into wine, transmuted base metals into gold. What of them now? The man in the street or the Minister of Government will tell you: Their names are enshrined in the national memory. A political phrase, a cheap phrase, old in parliamentary mouths. What is remembered? The story of their death, heroic indeed, but no more to themselves than an advertisement to their faith.

What was their faith? As you call on their dæmonic names, ask yourselves how far you are behind their thought, their purpose and their faith. It is in those things in them that are worthy of your memory, not merely their death that was but a signal to them. If they were alive to-day, where would they stand in relation to your politics, your undisguised capitalist

industrialism, your culture of the cinema and the sensational press. Have you continued their work in attempting to place our people outside the rot of this, climax of humanitarian centuries, that saves labour and destroys the labourer in the same breath ; this civilisation of anti-toxins and vaccines, of high explosives and mustard gas.

They began what was yours to labour at. And you have forgotten. You have changed living men into myths and robbed them of power. If you would know them, do not drown their voices in your pageants, your empty slogans, that a new generation might learn from his own voice what the Nationalism of Pearse did really mean ; what James Connolly really died for. And the people will soon learn that it was not for the pottage of to-day.

Of these men that died, least is heard among the mighty of James Connolly. And why ? Did not Connolly die ? Was he not a signatory to the proclamation ? Did he not, equally with Pearse, give you something worth fighting for. Did you not agree with him that a nation was not worth saving unless you gave justice to rich and poor alike ? You knew what he meant when he spoke of justice, not sweated labour, goaded into ever recurring strikes by rings and trusts growing in power ; not a policy of industrialisation based on the capitalist, survival-of-the-fittest, power-to-money philosophy that he fought against. Or did he teach and fight and in the end die for the State you now acquiesce in ? His legacy of word and deed belies it. Why do you not condemn him for his spirit and yours are at enmity—an enmity that will close with your defeat.

The life of a nation has its seasons like the earth itself. Winter is followed by the regeneration of spring, the flowering of summer and the fruit of autumn. At the end of each cycle that life is richer with experience, with achievement, though so far behind the promise of a time of regeneration that achievement often wears the aspect of failure.

EDWARD SHEEHY.

LYIN' LIKE A LAMB

"AY, deed, she lay a long time, my auntie; nearly six years. But the good thing was, even at the end she didn't suffer. In her body, I mean. I didn't know how she was in her mind. Dear save us, it wasn't until after that I learn't the way of it. Ay, or maybe I didn't."

"But come in now a wee moment. Sit down on the chair, sir. I'll look you an egg or two in the nests; maybe half a dozen would be all, but they're good eggs, and they'll put you over a while."

As she went out, the tiny cottage seemed to close in round me, restricted as a cell. It was dim and narrow, like a deep pool in the rocks below, into which, because of the overhanging cliffs the light even of high day could scarcely penetrate. The only chair was before an open fireplace where a few peats lay smouldering; their ashes, like doves' feathers, were heaped about them. The room ran back very little behind me; rightly so, because it was only a casket for that precious fire. At one side was a bed, at the other, the corner of floor seemed to have been made into a little pen, with boards which enclosed a space of about six square feet. It was empty now, however.

She came in again, lightly enough. Even so, her small pattering feet were misshapen in great ugly boots. By her voice, she couldn't be very old, and yet she was wrought upon so by rheumatism that her figure was like the strange thorns beside the road above, twisted by the need to live through winter and rough weather.

She smiled very cheerfully at me. "Six, I said, and seven there are, now. Walking the country with a pack on your shoulders will be a great appetite for you, and health, too. Now a cup of tea before you go on?" Her dark, bushy brows under which she looked up at me as she said this, made the having of tea into a grim jest between us that might save us from the vanity of indifferent thanks and compliment, or even from hanging ourselves before night fell maybe, in a sudden pet of soul.

"Ay, I'm alone now. And even more than I miss her, though I don't know that I should say it, at this time of year I miss the lambs she would be having in here."

"She kept lambs, did she?" I asked foolishly enough.

"Och, well, you wouldn't be caring about that, but at this season, in March and April, we are thinking of nothing else.

What else have we the round of the months, but a few potatoes, or a weeney wee bit of barley? I've seen that last nodding often enough in the spray from the sea itself. And it does right well with us always. But overlooking us from the road there you'd see how we are. Just as if somebody had given the cliffs a great big dint with his thumb, and we're in the print of it. Below us and above us, except where the wee pad comes down you could hardly get foothold. But the sheep can have it bravely. The grass is just for them, besides, matty and coarse on the skin of soil over the rocks.

Well, my auntie did what she had to do, like most of us, in our days. There was the sheep and the hens and the house, besides. But latterly, during the six years she was lying, she took a great notion to the lambs, especially. Och, I thought it a pity of her. She was old, you know, and I deemed she was weak in the head altogether, and wandering. But now I sometimes think it was me was stupid.

She had a trouble in her life, a great sorrow when she was a young woman. Not that it was one out of the way, at all. She was just pledged to a fellow, and the day before the wedding he went off, ay, he left her. No, I don't think another woman was in it. I say people are daft with their insisting there must be. I tell you, he was one to say he'd like to stretch his legs round the world when he was young. Well, so he did, seemingly. We never saw him again.

She was stricken with it, we knew that. But there wasn't much talk about it,—what was the use? We just did what we could to ease her. She was to have been married from a fine, big house, back up the country, which my grandfather had given her. But after that she couldn't live there at all, of course. Nor could she bear to go back to her own people in the same district. So my father offered her this wee cottage near his farm down here. And I came to stay with her.

In a year or two the whole countryside wouldn't have been without my auntie for worlds. She was a wee body, but she never gave you that impression somehow, and the way she had of holding herself made her very respected. She was a fine looking woman, then, very full of life. I was a young child when I came to her, and I liked her from the very first. Everything was good to be doing with her. It was always "We'll be getting on with it," from her. And for miles around if you were sick, or in need of someone to help you when all yours had the measles together you would find her at your elbow, people said.

Latterly she called herself an old crow, always hopping about

and croaking on a dull, overcast day. But she didn't croak, nor she didn't do any foolish cheering of you up just by holding your hand and saying everything would come right of itself, by the passing of time. "Ah, well, it's bad enough," she'd say, "but you stay quiet there a while. And I'll be getting on with it." And everything would be all right for you.

When at last she took to her bed you can see what a change it was for her. And you'll understand why I thought she was doting when I tell you that all her ideas seemed to change at the same time. She gave up worrying at not being able to do things for herself, or for anyone else. She seemed to look at everything in a new, simple sort of way.

"Since I've lain here," she would say, "I've come to a little of the knowledge I should have had long since. I think I knew once that from the like of lambs and the young joy of them, comes the secret of understanding. But I forgot : I put it away. Now I've come to know again something of the innocence, ay, and the wisdom they have."

Well, seeing I'd always thought of lambs as daft wee creatures, I couldn't agree with her. But, of course, I didn't argue the point. I said, yes, and how well she was getting on, and how cheerful she looked. Mind you, that last was true. I'd never known her so content. Specially in the lambing season. I'd bring the weakly wee things in here, that maybe weren't going to do at all outside. And she'd comfort them. Man, they—they couldn't die with her. We kept them in the pen there, till they were right and strong. She could get to and fro across the fire to feed and look after them.

But she wouldn't keep them very long. "Musn't make them soft," she said. "We'll let them learn the strength of life they have in them first, and then we'll let them go." When they showed that strength by the wee springs and waggles of their bodies right up into the air, she would gaze at them a long time, and laugh, and say : "They've learn't enough now, you can put them outside to know themselves."

When I came back from leaving them with the flock she'd say : "It's a terrible indulgence of ourselves this management of others troubles. But it's innocent enough with those creatures. Now I'll lean back here, and try to understand what life it is I have myself. Lyin' here like a lamb ; that's how I should be. Know your own life first, the strength and joy of it : the rest's nothing but conceit to your neighbours."

As I told you, she went very quickly at the finish. And when we'd buried her there was the house to think of. What

house?—didn't I tell you, the big house my grandfather gave her, the one she was to be married from. Ay, all that time it was still her's. It had lain empty there, she wouldn't let nor sell it ; whatever we said she wouldn't heed us, and as she had a bit of money besides that, it wasn't for us to say further.

In my turn, then, it came to me. I got what I could for it, and I didn't do so badly, neither. But it was a dreadful thing to go into it for the first time, after just short of fifty years. I think age and loneliness in things like that are worse than ruin itself. The long weariness and disuse of those rooms troubled my heart.

And I declare to you, upstairs, lyin' across one of the beds was her wedding dress, her gloves, her veil—Ay, I know, I know, we needn't cry over things. All that was over and foregone and past sorrow, no doubt.

But there was one thing explained a little to me. His letters to her were there. And in his last but one, she'd destroyed that, I suppose—written just a few days before he left, he'd said : “ I'm thinking and thinking that in a short while now I'll hold your fresh young life in my arms, and you lying there like—like a lamb, my dear.”

RAYMOND CALVERT.

ART

THE ACADEMY

One can say with safety that the latest exhibition of the Royal Hibernian Academy is much the same as the previous one hundred and six. Such an exhibition is a reflection of society, and for the majority of the exhibitors the world appears to have stood still since the year 1823 when the Academy was founded. The lifetime of most of the painters represented has been untroubled by any thought of change and the majority are painting in the exact manner of thirty years ago, and with the same attitude towards their subjects.

There are three notable exceptions to this generalisation, and they are Keating, McGonigal and Kernoff. They are quite foreign to the rest of the exhibition, and it is more than coincidence that these three Academicians have recently contributed articles to the "Irish People," an organ associated with what is vaguely called "advanced thought."

Keating's artistic development is very interesting. He exhibits a huge canvas entitled "Slán Leat, a Athair" depicting a group of Aran Islanders saying farewell to a priest who is preparing to leave in a curragh, presumably for the mainland. The first thing that strikes one about this gigantic picture is that it is painted with an impatient disregard of what is known as "quality." In fact it cannot be truly called painting at all. But Mr. Keating is well able to paint, and when he chooses to expend so much energy it must be that he has something to tell which will not wait for fine craftsmanship or that he is possessed by a frenzy which would be dissipated in careful handling. In the last few years he has begun to exhibit pictures which are plainly parables. And while one can conceive of an artist wishing to crystallize in paint an emotional experience, it is hard to believe that the scene here painted, unless weighted by some inner significance, could have fired Mr. Keating with an enthusiasm sustained over thirty square feet of canvas. Keating is a searching observer and a powerful draughtsman. The cold and gloomy sky, the crashing wave, the long swell of the ocean—one can detect, beneath the paint, the straight line originally intended—and the gnarled forms of the fishermen are in contrast with the figure of the priest, portly, round-shouldered, and crowned with a bald spot. This analysis of the work seems to lead to a conclusion which possibly the artist would repudiate, but it seems as if Mr. Keating were more pre-occupied here with his message than his materials. It is magnificent, but is it painting? It is certainly not the same art which is seen in his portrait of O'Daly, where the intensity is allied to a more fluid brush-work.

Maurice McGonigal is another troubled soul. In his work there is none of that self-satisfaction generally visible in the Academy. His portraits of Messrs. Higgins and Bourke are savage paintings, grim and uncompromising. Yet he is gravely concerned with the quality of his surfaces. In all his exhibits the same wrestling with his medium is apparent. Paint and Mr. McGonigal

are practically at war. He struggles to get the full value from his materials, and this must mean progression. He is also deeply concerned with design and composition. In distinction to Keating there is no message in his work beyond an aesthetic one, unless his interior of the Olympia Theatre can be construed into a lament for the passing of plush seats and gilt mirrors—and after all that is an aesthetic message too. But a profound dissatisfaction with accepted standards is reflected in his painting, and we cannot see Mr. McGonigal declining into the academic torpor and complacently producing, year after year, new variants of an ancient McGonigal pattern.

And Mr. Kernoff. Kernoff has stripped the visual world of many things which make it recognisable in what seems to be an intellectual effort to reduce nature to her skeleton. His simplification of form is not due to laziness, nor has he been tempted to invent a new art in which (being its only exponent) he can become a master without any preliminary sweat. That course is only for those who have never learned to draw and this cannot be charged against Kernoff, whose energy is inexhaustible, though it might be said that he is in danger of forgetting. Drawing has been so easy for Kernoff that he is forever seeking a new point of view, and most of his pictures are painted with the eye of an aviator, an oriental aviator, for whom a Connemara landscape resolves into a hardness and clarity not discernible to western eyes.

Mr. Yeats has two pictures in the manner he developed (with startling suddenness) about ten years ago. He is an honest man, honestly attempting to find a new and more expressive language in paint. Persons apparently intelligent have hailed these works as great art, but an examination of their surfaces makes any further consideration of them unnecessary. The paint appears to be the scrapings of a palette, mixed up at random and laid on a quarter of an inch thick. In this mass the artist has delineated form, such as that of a head or tree, by dragging the surface with a brush without changing the strange mixture beneath. Now we demand of a painter, or of a plumber, that when he begins a work he should have some idea of what the result will be. Jack Yeats' method does not allow of this. Any result obtained is and must be accidental, as the materials are quite uncontrolled and his method precludes any possibility of intention.

For the rest, the President, Mr. Dermot O'Brien, may be accepted as typical of academic art. He is now painting better than ever in his life. His small landscapes are executed more freely, surely and honestly than ever before. He has attained to a high degree of technical perfection, and he has a keen sense of the charm of nature. His work is very pleasing, but it is self-satisfied. It must be years since Dermot O'Brien ever doubted anything, and it is this placid acceptance of his environment that has so circumscribed his art. Within his limitations he is highly competent, but it is not enough. And the dull mediocrity of the rest of the Academy arises from the same unquestioning acceptance of life.

JOHN DOWLING.

MUSIC

FUNDAMENTALS

It is to be regretted that the modern Gaelic revival has been, mainly, in literary hands ; that, at its inception and during its life, it had within it no Ruskin, no da Vinci, no Diaghliev or Nijinsky, no Grieg, each to deal with his own particular cultural sphere, to give it direction and critical standards. All the arts, except that of literature, have been accounted of secondary importance and very little understanding of the peculiar problems of these arts has been shown by the pioneers of revival or their followers.

One of the fundamental differences between music and the other arts is that the composer may rarely reach the people directly, that he and his thought are at the mercy of the executant who presents his work to the people. The ignoring of this basic fact is one of the main reasons for the failure of the effort to resuscitate Irish music. Such resuscitation must deal with three factors : the music, that is the composer's work, the executant, the artist who presents the work, and the people, for whom such presentation is given.

No one will quarrel with the pioneers who laid down the axiom that to-day should be a living connection with yesterday, that all that was best in Ireland should be preserved for and by the people. Such preservation in literature was not too difficult. In private, no man could come between the author and the reader, and the measure of an author's value could be assessed by consulting other standard works. In public, if a recitalist or actor gave a bad performance, the listener, by consulting printed editions, could assess the value of the work and the measure of the performer's error.

In music this was not so. Few were able to procure the printed collections and, taking up an instrument, play what was there written and so correct their aural impressions by close acquaintance with the music itself. As a rule they had to accept what the performer presented to them as an expert, had to accept him as the final arbiter of what was good or bad. Ultimately the thing to be judged was not the music but the playing of the music. And this did unmeasured harm to the music, the artist, and the people : for, what was to be preserved was left to the judgment of the executant, and he, hailing both his strength and his weakness as truly Gaelic and national, called on the people to admire. Any criticism of his performance he silenced by saying that his grandmother played so, and if the critic, even then, had the temerity to doubt the value of the performance, he was told that he did not understand traditional music, that he was anglicized, and so on. Thus, a belief in the preservation of what was good in the past was translated into the dogma that : " only what was old was worth the preserving."

This dogma, that what was old was good and its preservation a main duty, brought with it unfortunately the implication that the artist's function was

much the same as that of a curio-hunter, whose existence was justified by the antiquity of his find, rather than by its beauty. Such a belief is the antithesis of all the artist's should be.

But, even with the acceptance of such a dogma, something might have been accomplished had the young artist immediately behind him a generation of creative artists and technical experts, to mould and refine his mind and direct his powers. But all that was behind him was the rags and tatters of an ancient thing, the remnants of a fine culture. Without schools for many hundred years, lacking for generations the art-leadership of great composers and executants, the people dimly remembered the lovely things that were, and, without training or technique, they gave utterance, as best they could, to their memories. And to these people as to the fountain-head went the young artist, not to take what was of value from them but to duplicate what he might hear. And this craze for duplication went to the most absurd lengths. A vocal tune transferred to an instrument was a duplicate in rhythm and intonation of something once heard—perhaps a very bad performance by an exceedingly villainous vocalist. Every stop made by the wretch for a gasp, every long note inserted for the pleasure of hearing his own voice, every villainy wreaked on the song appeared in the instrumental version, and tunes that were once taut, well-built things, waddled round and bulged monstrously at corners. When to these horrors were added in instrumental performance bad intonation and wretched tone, the performance could only be assessed as a rather grisly practical joke. And so when the early pioneers called for the preservation of old things—they got, in musical performance, crudity.

And among the uninitiated the thought grew that such crudity was the thing to be preserved ; in this way did the old people play, they were assured, and that silenced all doubt about the desirability of preserving what they had heard.

So false standards were set up as the result of the thought which insisted that the way of playing a tune was of more importance than the tune itself—the vessel was of greater importance than its contents. And performers came to pride themselves on the possession of tunes or variants of tunes differing from the commonly accepted versions. It was a matter of little importance that these personal variants should be far inferior in quality to the version commonly known : the important thing was never the possession of a better variant but of a different one. To achieve this pride of possession men sought out ornamented versions of old tunes and when it was impossible to procure such they put their own "turns" in these airs ; every meritriciously offensive ornament that egoism and bad taste could suggest were imposed on those unfortunate airs and the pride of these men was great when the resultant wilderness of flourishes emphatically blotted out any semblance of elegance the tune had ever known.

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THEATRE

CRITIC AND REGISSEUR

The Art of the Theatre consists of the manipulation of many different factors such as—colour, line and mass of setting ; tone, texture and group relations of costumes ; rhythms in individual, choral or dialogic speaking ; overtones and intonations, stress and acceleration of voice ; rhythm of movement and gesture ; stage grouping and movement ; use of music as background, as creator of atmosphere ; use of lighting to focus attention, to introduce mood-suggestions, from colour, otherwise impossible, to create new scenes from the same setting in a logical mood-sustaining manner. These as a whole form the *mise-en-scène*.

Our present theatres disregard many of these factors and rely for the rest on the work, mainly undirected, of many different people—actors, scene designers, stage crew, electricians, producers, etc.

But the highest art of the theatre can appear only when all these factors are directed and determined absolutely by *one* person, to whom I shall apply the Continental term of *régisseur*. For the essence of art consists in the *unified* application of a physical medium to express a spiritual entity latent in the mind of the artist. To express the same entity in various ways at the same time will fail artistically without co-ordination ; to express various entities latent in various minds, through the same medium at the same time, is certain to fail, although this is what our theatres at present attempt to do. Accordingly both the entity and the application of the medium to express it must come from the same mind. The *régisseur* is such a mind. I claim further that only such critics as adopt this view and base their criticism on this conception of the theatre, as a complex organism complete and one in itself, can adequately assess the *real* value of work done in the contemporary theatre. Their criticism can then claim to have some *absolute* value and be of use in assessing *relative* values of both productions and the many sub-sections of productions.

By adopting this view of the theatre, we bring it into line with other art forms, where an individual mind works with various tools to body forth the inner vision which it alone possesses. The *mise-en-scène* in the Theatre is to the *régisseur* what the finished painting is to the painter. The various factors mentioned earlier are amongst the tools the *régisseur* uses in the theatre. He uses the theatre for one thing only, the creation in time and space on the stage of his inner vision as called up by a play. The theatre in all its complexity is for him an artistic medium through which he aspires to create the Vision Beautiful. He will endeavour to induce that vision in his audience, first by analysing the influences arousing it in him on reading a given text and then using his craft to re-create these influences on the stage so as to evoke an identical vision in his audience. All these factors are used by him with a sensitiveness born of insight into the fundamental affinity of all art, no matter what the medium. Knowing as he does the root principle underlying the

mechanism of the arts, relying on the common substratum of sensibility in humanity which is similarly if not equally affected in each individual by the same stimuli, and finally knowing what he wants to create, it is obvious that the final result, if he is completely master of this very complex medium, must be of extremely rich yet subtle beauty. From this richness everyone can enjoy his work in some phase or other, from its subtlety only very few can enjoy it fully. This inner vision, this sensitiveness to atmosphere, to detail, is a matter for himself—the true artist is born not made.

This, then, is the outlook of the *régisseur* and his justification. In my view he is the greatest artist in the theatre, transcending actors and designers pure and simple. So much for the *régisseur* as an artist. It will be understood that there are many minor points in this view open to attack, especially from the “sub-sections” of the theatre, but consideration of these must be deferred.

It will be agreed, however, that such a régime in a theatre would offer full opportunity for work of real artistic worth which would undoubtedly be a contribution to the general culture of the community.

The question then is, granting the desirability of the *régisseur*'s existence in the Irish Theatre—does he exist, and if not, are the times ripe for his appearance and support? Neither is the case, but it is my belief, having this outlook (which I have already adopted in practical play production with success) I can as critic act as spokesman for those, and there must be quite a few, who hold the same views to a greater or less extent. The trend of opinion thus created will afford encouragement to the genuine artists in the Irish Theatre to try to create such a régime which undoubtedly would offer the widest scope for their talents.

It is certain that work of the high standard set here is not being now done in Dublin, and I, as critic, will not be satisfied until it is being done—which in all probability means that I will never be satisfied. Such a régime will not appear and be maintained until the conditions are favourable and this involves the co-operation of the public for whom I function as spokesman. For while the *régisseur* sets the pace, his dictatorial position of absolute authority exposes him to the danger of abuse of power, distortion of standards and above all, a yielding to cynicism if he finds no real sympathy with his outlook, no intelligent appreciation of his work, and most lamentable of all, no co-operation from his actors or working group.

Co-ordination, perfect in every detail, is the hall mark of the *régisseur*, and I see none of it now in Dublin. Some years ago, when possibly my standards may have been lower, there *was* a *régisseur* at the “Gate”—the Hilton-Edwards-Michael MacLiammoir combination—which used to be so perfect but which has alas, departed. The two seemed to fuse into one mind functioning perfectly, and their productions were a joy and a delight. I shall never forget “Romeo and Juliet” as done then, nor shall I ever forget the travesty of it done recently by the same group. Whole worlds and bottomless abysses of feeling, artistry and technique separated the two. There have been other

shows such as "Noah" at the Abbey and "Lady Precious Stream" at the "Gate" that have delighted many, but others were almost insufferable for lack of true feeling, of co-ordination of activity.

This is the fundamental flaw of the commercial theatre in any case that a show must go on, no matter what a producer or the actors themselves think of it. In what other medium is the artist prepared to sell unfinished work or even to subject it to criticism? The commercial theatres spoil their public and in turn are spoiled by them. It is a vicious circle. I have seen an actress at the Abbey shatter the whole mood of a scene meant to be tragic by dumb-show utterly uncalled for and meant to be comic and accepted as such with delighted laughter by her "fans" amongst the audience. Until such insincerity is banished and full co-operation achieved no perfect theatrical work will be possible at the Abbey, and Mr. Hunt and his collaborator, Miss Moiseiwitsch, who seem in perfect accord, will be simply wasting their time.

A show I saw recently which is of interest in relation to the foregoing was the first production of "Armlet of Jade," Lord Longford's play, at the Gate, by the Dublin Drama League. The play has lately run in London with quite warm approval from London critics. I regret I cannot agree. My views being what they are, the production itself failed to please me, neither setting nor staging helped, nor was there any sense of life in the *ensemble*. Two men stood out for real sincerity—Robert Hennessy as the Emperor and John Stephenson as his Chief Eunuch. Ria Mooney was a pale shadow of her real self, but then her part was badly underwritten. As for the play itself—which I must judge from this production, not having read the text—I thought it badly constructed and almost tedious, in spite of flashes of real wit, here and there, in the first two acts which were too prosy, too obviously striving to be Chinese in idiom while Act 3 was insufficiently developed and gave a sense of hurried close. Besides, a fundamental inconsistency spoiled it for me—though written from the Chinese angle it did not adopt the Chinese view of the plot, but sentimentalised it, thereby weakening the whole play. "Armlet of Jade" is here made the real sufferer—for the Chinese she is merely a symbol of the Emperor's loss in surrendering a reality for an empty abstraction, a type universally found. The loss of universal appeal in this way might possibly have been saved by the production through use of right emphasis in staging and setting, but it was not. Both play and production were to blame.

SEAN O MEARA.

FILMS

CINEMA AS CINEMA

THERE seems to be a growing tendency to-day to regard the function of the film critic as one consisting of the extraction of facts of a sociological significance from whatever films may come his way. It only needed such a view point to be added to the confusion of the talkie. Such an attitude in its attempt to intellectualize with a show of patronage 'a vulgar entertainment,' is well on the way to deprive it of its function as an art-form.

Mr. Huntley Carter in one of the most boring books it has ever been my fate to read—"The New Spirit in the Cinema"—has built up sociological theories regarding the cinema. The book (to be quite just to the author) has a most interesting collection of facts and information, but one could not help feeling that somehow Cinema transcended all this, and that whatever else Mr. Carter was, he was not a film critic. To-day, when some of the tendencies predicted by Mr. Carter are being fulfilled in contemporary Cinema, there will be a swing round of criticism in favour of the sociological approach. This, I feel, is highly undesirable, because it can very easily approach the sentimental.

The film with a social purpose is on its way. This, I suggest, is Hollywood's belated reaction to the Soviet Film which in its turn has reverted to the primitive "Jazz Comedy." Vidor's "Miracle of Life," "The March of Time" news reels, and Korda's "Things to Come," all indicate the tendency in modern films to reflect the world's problems, and I do not say that such a tendency is anything but a good one. But the fact remains that when it comes to the question of criticism of individual films, this criticism must approach the film as a film and not as a social tract.

When there are promises of newer novelties in store for us in the all-colour and stereoscopic film, we may be induced to wander still further from the path of simple and essential film.

With the opening up of the talkie screen to its true subject matter, the statics of the "Singing Fool" era have passed away. Nevertheless the possibilities of the screen have still to be fully explored. Nor, in many cases, are the producers any wiser—they mix their styles in their devotion to the "ten heads are better than one" formula.

Take acting, for instance. It is only once in a while that a performance on the screen appeals to us as being in its proper place. Too often we accept a screen performance because the director of the film has so clouded the issue that it becomes a matter of indifference to us as to what the player is doing. We listen to a voice telling the story. Many a stage player recruited to the talkies has never considered the differences between stage and film. I have recently heard an English critic who went into ecstasies over the camera work, settings and direction of "Things to Come," bewailing the lack of cinematic consciousness and subtlety in its well-known actors—Hardwicke, Richardson and Massey.

But there is a technique of screen acting. One has only to think of Werner Krauss as "Dr. Caligari," or as Robespierre in that magnificent scene in "Danton" where he is insulted by his colleague before the Assembly. Jannings, Veidt, Chaplin. The players of the Russian films—Inkishinov and Baranovskaia Jeanne Marie Laurent in her unforgettable performance as the mother in "Therese Raquin." (In that dud film of Siodmak's, "The Slump is over," it was she who asked the crowds the way to the Elysee-Clichy Theatre. Alas ! she seemed so very, very much at sea). All these players grew to recognise the screen as making distinct demands on their talents, and they took the trouble to find things out and use their discoveries.

Choice of subject is often to blame. Talk is not Cinema. In Ireland we cannot be too critical of these new attempts to produce films here. Let us not be sentimental in this respect. It is as easy to produce a film as it is to produce a music-hall-variety-lantern-lecture synthesis. The latter montrosity must not be allowed to pass as a film, just because the thing was "deanta i nEirinn." And while certain artists may be perfectly charming and brilliant on the stage or concert hall, it does not follow that they are photogenic or form material for legitimate cinema. Why, too, relate a film of island life off our Western Coast to Synge's "Riders to the Sea"? That's being sentimental. Such a play could have no relation to a film and the film in question might well trade on its own merits without the association with Synge.

As a still further example of cinema stupidity we have the treatment of brilliant independent film craftsmen by the studio executives. It is exemplified in Clair, Pabst and Siodmak. I have not yet seen Clair's "The Ghost Goes West," but judging from the material he got to produce, I imagine that the work will be several degrees poorer than that in "Le Million." Pabst was a commercial and artistic flop in Hollywood. Siodmak was, I believe, the producer of a distinguished film, "Mennschen am Sonntag," but in "La Crise est Finie" he has been asked to handle a cheap imitation of Clair and Hollywood and the worst has happened.

There's nothing wrong with modern film technicians ; there are plenty of intelligent film actors ; but nobody thinks of making a straight honest-to-God film. It always seems to be spancellor to a theory, a literary man, a music-hall star or a dance band.

In the meantime I console myself with a few names which have never disappointed me—King Vidor ("Street Scene," "The Crowd" and "Miracle of Life"), Henry King ("Eyes of the World," "House of Connolly," "Way Down East.") Then, too, there are the newsreels, the Disneys and Andrew Buchanan's Gaumont Magazine. In one of the latter I've seen a study of rain which I could wish to be of the shape of things to come—Cinema as Cinema, making no concessions to painting, music, drama or literature and establishing its own distinctive and great qualities.

LIAM Ó LAOGHAIRE.

NO LIMIT: *Direction by Monty Banks.*

Showing a programme with Laurel and Hardy's "Fra Diavolo" was in the nature of a great discovery. Here was a film laying no claim to art but having all the essentials of a deeply felt sincerity. The healthy vulgarity of the industrial areas of England on holiday in the Isle of Man. The clever portrayal of English psychology and humour. Direction by Monty Banks and perfect performances by George Formby and Florence Desmond. Photography excellent. The sheer joy of living and sentimental kindness pervading this film make it a unique experience. It can take its place beside the humanities of Pudovkin and is a credit to English cinema. To do it justice would require a full length essay. A film to see again and again.

L. O. L.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT: *Direction by Josef von Sternberg.*

Von Sternberg's pedestrian "Crime and Punishment," has emphasized Hollywood's inability to establish spirituality on the screen. The transference of the Dostoevsky novel demanded a special sympathy and sense of value which a vast commercial machine is unable to provide. Consequently, the conflict between the police inspector and Raskolnikov degenerates into gangster melodrama, while the character of Sonia becomes mawkish and cheaply sentimental. The treatment was episodic and lacked the fluidity of film. Indeed, Gaston Baty's theatre version given in Dublin last year could beat it easily on this latter score. There was an element of confusion in the locale. The opening subtitle informed us that the scene was "any place where human hearts responded to love and hate." But if it was intended to generalize the locale why stick to Russian details here and there. The camera work and lighting were as disappointing as the settings, being the usual uninspired borrowing from Pabst, Wiene and the other Continentals. The texture of the photography set the keynote of the film—stale, flat and unprofitable. One could not but admire the efforts of Tala Birell as Antonia (Dounia) to put up a good performance in a chaos of mediocrity. Peter Lorre managed to convey the impression of a lost soul, but not in the Dostoevskian sense.

L. O. L.

MUSIC—*continued from page 63*

And who could blame the people if having listened to ill-mannered crudity they turned away and followed their inclination which, to them, was less raw and rude than this performance—even though such performance were dubbed truly Gaelic? If they now wander among maudlin, sentimental, ill-bred things like the "Rose of Tralee," their revolt, if not excusable, is understandable.

The Gaelic revival has justified itself in many ways, made living things of many seeming-impossible dreams, but it has done nothing to prevent the degradation of a marvellous music that should be our pride. It has stood idly by, sometimes has shouted encouragingly, while a noble thing was dragged by bumptious egoists to the doors of pot-houses.

EAMONN O GALLCOBHAI

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Hollywood Cemetery. By Liam O'Flaherty. (Gollancz. 7s. 6d.).

Tuesday Afternoon. By L. A. G. Strong. (Gollancz. 7s. 6d.).

Up in the Hills. By Lord Dunsany. (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.).

Somewhere to the Sea. By Kenneth Reddin. (Nelson. 7s. 6d.).

Holy Ireland. By Norah Hoult. (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.).

Jackets Green. By Patrick Mulloy. (Grayson. 7s. 6d.).

Bones of Contention. By Frank O'Connor. (Macmillan. 7s. 6d.).

All on the Irish Shore. By Denis Ireland. (Rich and Cowan. 7s. 6d.).

A FEW books remain in the memory from the end of last year, and as readers are more likely to think of books by their length of stay on the booksellers' shelves than by their first appearance on the publishers' lists, these might be mentioned. *Full House*, by M. J. Farrell (Collins, 7s. 6d.) was a rippling, sunny book about the Big House folk with a dash of the macabre thrown in, which is a mixture that entices one to call it a tempest at a tea-party—but it is clever and something more than the conventional 'pleasant reading,' and one felt that Miss Farrell was limited less by her skill than her experience. (Miss Farrell is a daughter of the poet, Moira O'Neill). *Stoker Bush*, by James Hanley (Chatto and Windus, 7s. 6d.) was a different pair of shoes—heavy, clopping shoes, kicking the furniture (and the wife) around the kitchen; a sullen book about a stoker, whose spiritual gropings and dartings reminded one of the flight of a bat; one could not evade the impact of the book or forget it easily, but one felt all the time that there was a deliberate straining after the brutal effect. Liam O'Flaherty's *Hollywood Cemetery* (Gollancz, 7s. 6d.) was a disappointment for most people, but I have met several readers who thought the satire grand stuff, and if one didn't know that this was a man of immense talent pot-boiling for others a brew for which he could have little stomach himself, one might have got more fun out of it. L. A. G. Strong's *Tuesday Afternoon* contained no story that diminished one's respect for his talent and integrity, and there was one story, *The White Cottage*, so tender, and so near to pure poetry, that one wished again that Mr. Strong would write only on impulse and never for the shiny magazines—for there were other stories that spoke of haste and the pressure of the Literary Agent, and suggested the image of a gentle fountain turned to the base use of balancing a coloured ball at a shooting gallery; the fountain was still a fountain, but the public, clearly, was not expected to look at it but at the toy it danced before their eyes. Inspiration does not move to secondary ends; it rejoices in itself alone. (One may be dogmatic about that, for it is dogma.) Lastly, there was Lord Dunsany's bantam-weight *Up in the Hills* (Heinemann, 7s. 6d.). This fantasia on the Troubles is not for Irish readers—generally speaking; it plays leap-frog with things that we are not yet able to joke about in quite so light-hearted a way. That is our loss and it does not in the least mean that *Up*

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in the Hills is not what the 18th century would have called "demmed amusing," very tender and delicate when it comes to the business of describing the Irish countryside, the evenings in the woods, the birds, the sunsets, the bogland, and solemn enough, too, when the guns begin to rattle and the blood flows. Our trouble is that it deals with our Troubles and it hits a dark spot in us that is a very tender spot, yet. It is typical of the equivocal condition of modern Irish intellectual life that I cannot for the life of me say whether or not it is in bad taste to play the Rakes of Mallow on our grave-stones. It wouldn't hurt the French public, I am certain, if a French fantaisite did this with the Great War; and I am equally certain that if Lord Dunsany were a German he wouldn't dare do it. The implication is obvious, namely, that literature needs a very free atmosphere to move in; wherefore, let us enjoy Dunsany's pleasantries lest we find our Nationalism turning our hearts sour.

The later books offer more variety. Dr. Collis's eager biography, *The Silver Fleece*, is reviewed lower down, and so is Francis Hackett's second novel, *The Green Lion*. I am, unfortunately, prevented from doing more than mentioning Austin Clarke's *The Singing Men of Cashel*, since the Censorship Board thinks it unsuitable for general publication: as are my opinions of the Censorship Board. That leaves me for fiction with three novels, Kenneth Reddin's *Somewhere to the Sea*, Norah Hoult's *Holy Ireland*, and Patrick Mulloy's *Jackets Green*, all at the standard price, published, in that order, by Nelsons, Heinemann, and Grayson; and one book of short stories, *Bones of Contention*, by Frank O'Connor (Macmillan).

Mr. Reddin's novel has had so much *réclame* that it is unnecessary to dally over it at this date, but it is always informative to recur, after the lapse of time, to a novel that one has previously enjoyed. And my feeling about *Somewhere to the Sea*, in recollection, is that it was a better book as a picture of Dublin than as a novel about people; indeed, I seem to feel, now, that there must have been much more in Mr. Reddin's head about Dublin life in general than came out of it in his book. This is probably no more than one would expect in what was virtually a first novel; also, no doubt, a public man labours under certain obvious inhibitions when it comes to wearing the heart on the sleeve. When Mr. Reddin has ordered his technique, decided what it is he really wants to do, and pitches the consequences to the wind, we may get a very amusing and a somewhat more revealing picture of a side of Irish life so far little dealt with in fiction. Miss Hoult's novel, on the other hand, is the work of a writer who knows exactly what she wants to get at, who has set herself to say what she wants to say in her own way and without equivocation; and in *Holy Ireland* she has said, at least half of it—there is to be a second volume. By this novel she claims a place as an Irish *expert*, a surveyor of the local scene, and unlike many of our surveyors she is not a quantity-surveyor but, to invent a term, a quality-surveyor; her novel is in the class of social criticism and her characters are not only alive as people but have their wider implications as types. There are many harsh overtones in that criticism but it

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is, on the whole, a warm-hearted book. In her second volume I hope she will expand the characters rather than the criticism, for they are, so far, by far the more original and interesting part of her work.

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Of Frank O'Connor's *Bones of Contention* it should be sufficient to say that it is an immense advance technically on *Guests of the Nation* without the slightest loss of warmth, humanity, humour, or serenity of judgment. It is a book which *does* reveal and *does* dig into the nature of our people.

Two books of general interest are Stephen Gwynn's *Irish Literature and Drama* (Nelson, 6s.), which is a most welcome volume. Since informed and intelligent criticism by Irishmen of Irish affairs is of the rarest. It is reviewed elsewhere in these columns. The other book is the very pleasant, light-hearted *All on the Irish Shore* of Denis Ireland, which also contains, in passing, and among many other things, some shrewd criticism of modern Irish literature, mainly, however, on the lines of Professor Daniel Corkery's "Valid-if-Traditional" criterion which, personally, I consider a most illiberal approach to any subject. Mr. Ireland's *journal d'observation* has all the charm of a book that is never straining to impress the reader. He is content to communicate his own personality in what appears to be, but I am sure is not, the most casual way, and since it is an attractive personality and he never allows himself to be even slightly acerbic, his book may be readily recommended to those in search of light, occasional reading.

With the exception of Mr. O'Connor's stories and Miss Hoult's novel, it is not a very remarkable list; it contains, otherwise, no book which one might expect to see, later, in a history of Irish prose. That, however, may be thought a somewhat Olympian standard and the list contains, as I think most people will agree, no book which does not adequately sustain the prestige of Anglo-Irish literature.

SEAN O FAOLAIN.

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Doctor Collis's autobiography may not, by the strict standards of literary criticism, be a great book. It is, quite definitely, a good book, the chief merit of which lies not so much in any undue eventfulness or excitingness of experience as in the altogether pleasing portrait which emerges of the author himself. The reader who adventures with him through Rugby School and international "Rugby" football, through the British Army for a brief spell, and Cambridge and Yale and the hospitals, until finally he settles where his heart is—in his own Ireland—will have travelled a pleasant road in pleasant company, and will have no cause to regret his journey. Doctor Collis writes sensitively and well, and in these memoirs gives full play to a keen and most relishable humour. We commend this book without reservation.

P.O'D.

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